



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

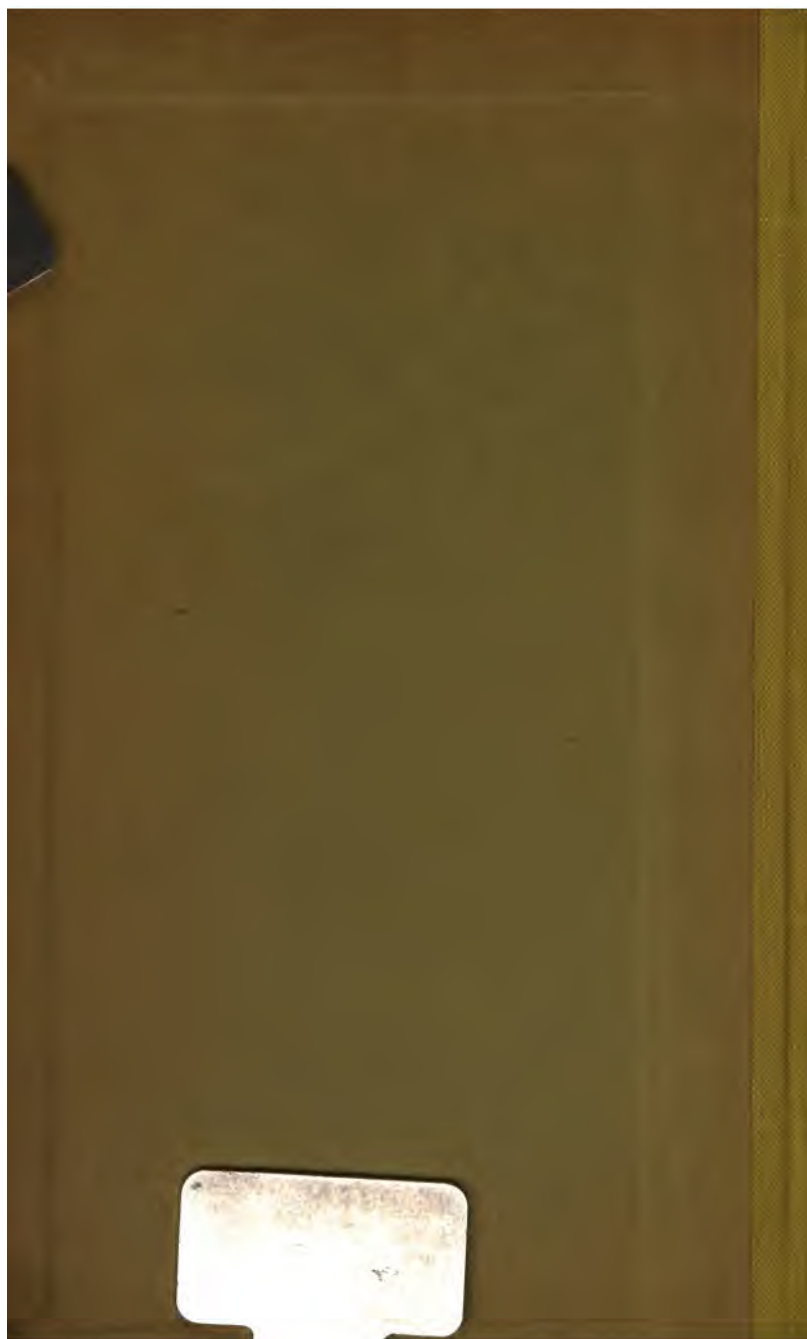
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

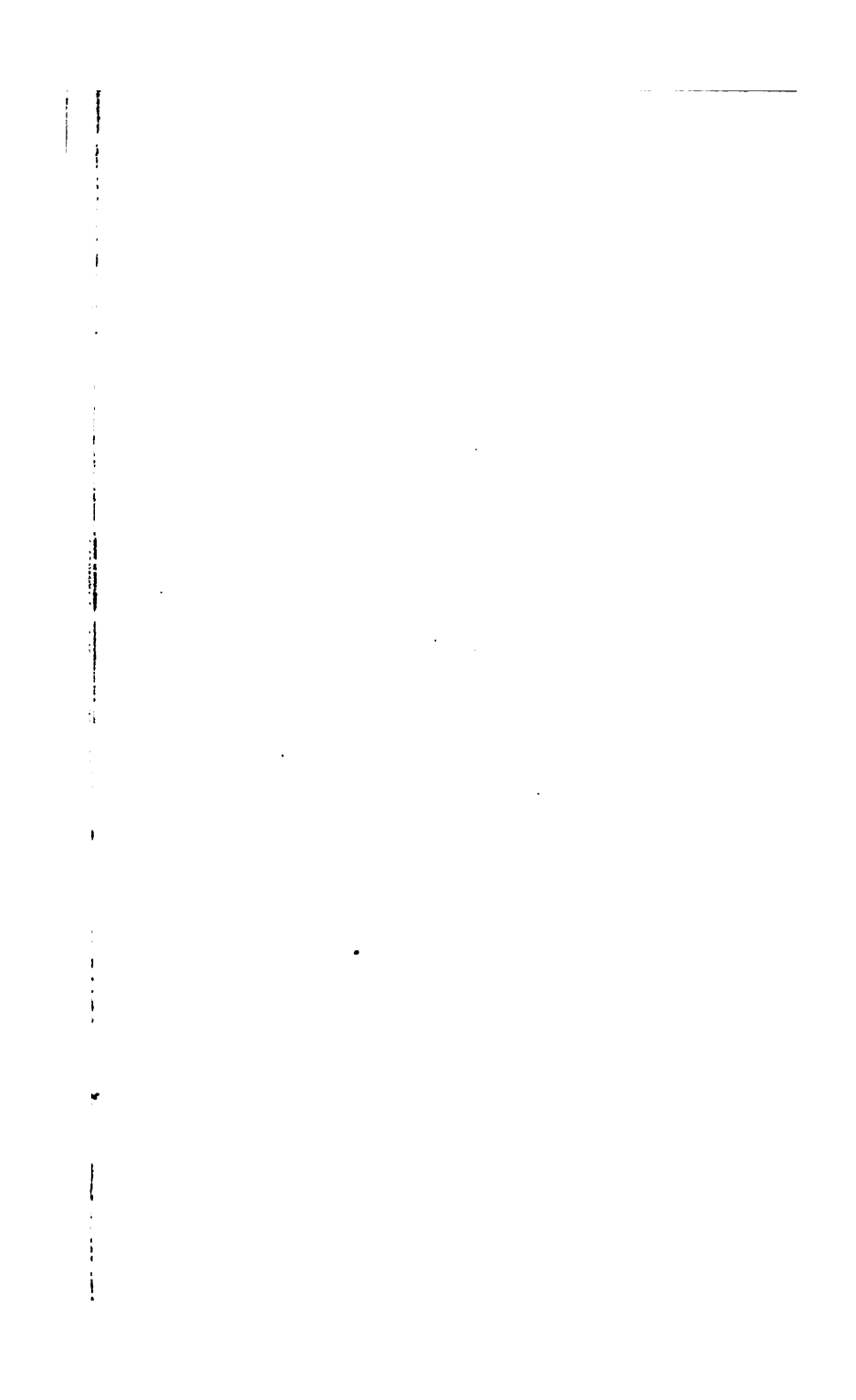
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07494740 3



new
C. H. K. 2



1404

DONATED BY THE
BROOKLYN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK CITY

JOHANNA

BY

B. M. CROKER

AUTHOR OF "THE CAT'S-PAW," "A FAMILY
LIKENESS," "TWO MASTERS," ETC.



M 37702

PHILADELPHIA

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1903

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
290195A

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1927 L

1800 W. 4th St.
Cleveland, Ohio
44115

TO
MRS. ROWAN-HAMILTON
SHANGANAGH CASTLE
SHANKILL
CO. DUBLIN



JOHANNA

CHAPTER I

JOHANNA was a Kerry girl, the only child of John Daly, a sour-faced, elderly widower, who made a livelihood by collecting eggs over a wide district, and retailing them to a wholesale house in Cork. He was continually from home—all day and in all weathers—being an active, hard-working man, who, according to local repute, was terribly fond of the money, and would beat the devil himself at a bargain. John's cabin was situated in a lovely, but lonely, spot, so isolated as to be extremely inconvenient for his trade ; but as it was his own property, and had been in the family for several generations, John Daly would as soon have contemplated changing his religion, as his residence.

The cottage stood at the end of a long green lane, which had several turnings, and was screened from

the passing gaze by a tangled hedge of fuchsia trees, and wild currants; it was two miles from Nolan's Cross, where the boreen joined the coach road, four from chapel, and five from the town. Johanna rarely made her way there, unless she had a few chickens to sell to the hotel. In summer-time she remained continuously at home, in order to mind the place—in other words to dig potatoes, herd goats, milk the cow, and feed the pigs. Her hands were full, and she had no time to run down to the Cross for a "collogue" with Mary Nolan, still less for a dance on Sunday afternoon, (for animals eat as much, and stray as far, on the Sabbath, as on week-days), and if she got to hear Mass once in three weeks, it was a great achievement. The Dalys' cabin stood at the far end of the long, straggling boreen, which led nowhere in particular, save up the mountain side. In times past the lane had seen better days, when the ruined village between the cottage and the Cross, had been a populous place, and the grass-grown track was a real high road; but no one ever used it now, save the Dalys and their visitors—and these, were few and far between.

Thus it may be gathered, that Johanna led a life almost as solitary and secluded as if she had been a

nun, and yet there was no handsomer girl between Valentia and Mallow. John Daly's cottage—which was whitewashed by his capable daughter—stood on a rising ground, surrounded by a patch of potatoes, a turf clamp, a byre, and a neat little garden, full of monthly roses, fuchsias, and marigolds. Johanna of the beautiful eyes had an eye for the beautiful, and were you to enter her kitchen, you would discover in a tin porringer, that shone like silver, an exquisite bunch of pink-tinted water-lilies. Those same water-lilies had been stolen from the bosom of a tiny loch that lay in the purple lap of a hill a mile from the cabin—a loch, even more secluded than Johanna herself, for it was shrouded by a veil of these flowers, and guarded by battalions of tall bullrushes. From this hidden lakelet, there pours a noisy and turbulent stream—which hurls itself down one side of the silent boreen—now singing merrily, again shouting to the bracken and heather, its triumphant escape from the dim mountain glen, next brawling angrily among the hoary boulders, who strive to bar its frantic passage to the wide, ever-thankless sea! The boreen itself is wild and solitary; here birds are very bold, and sleek little black cattle saunter at their ease, snatching at

the tufts of luscious grass, drinking, as connoisseurs, from the crystal brook. Do they ever recall this peaceful track when, lame, bewildered, parched with thirst and terrified, they are driven through a city's unheeding streets—to the shambles?

Under foot is deep, soft moss—and a faint indication of ancient wheel-ruts. At one side lies the short-cropped turf, and vivid stretches of furze; on the other, the anxious river gleams and foams over the grey pebbles. Above, hang clumps of wild fuchsia; whilst overhead are the dark mountains, and the soft blue sky.

And here comes the goddess of the glen, loch and mountain—and well she justifies her title. Johanna is twenty years of age, five feet ten inches in height, and splendidly handsome. She wears the blue cloth cape—thrown over her shoulders—as if it were some royal mantle (and justly prefers it, to the hideous brown-and-white shawl, which has recently been the rage in Kerry). Johanna is a typical beauty: her eyes are a deep grey, her hair—which is wound round her head in massive coils—is as black as night, her features are not small, but they are perfectly modelled, her brow is broad and low, the chin rounded, her upper lip short, the skin—where it is

not sunburnt—is dazzlingly fair, her throat and arms are as white as milk—and yet there is not a soul to admire this magnificent creature ! nothing but a couple of little Kerry cows—who are much attached to her—and a brace of boneens, who have accompanied their mistress, partly from pure affection, and partly from the passionate craving to see—and to be seen—which is so deeply implanted in the heart of every Kerry pig !

Johanna did not owe her extraordinary good looks to John the egg-hawker—who is a hard-featured person, with a short nose, a long upper lip, and a pair of little greedy green eyes. No, she has inherited—with interest—the beauty of her mother, Johanna O'Hara, a stranger from some outlandish place beyond the Shannon, who made no freedom with her neighbours, was terribly stand-off in herself, and who—perhaps in consequence—died young. John, the hawker, was believed to be a “warm man,” although when the priest sent round, he pleaded bitter poverty, and was invariably “took ill” when there was a station in his neighbourhood. Nevertheless he owned a snug cottage, five acres of land, a fine dresser full of crockery, an eight-day clock—also there was a stout muzzle-loader up the chimney,

for when the egg season was slack, and John was ostensibly working at home, he was really one of the most industrious poachers in the county, and to set a snare, or shoot a hare, there was not a better warrant than John Daly. His companion and confederate was a long black dog—known by the innocent appellation of “the Pup”—who accompanied him on all expeditions—whether the aim were eggs or birds—and who—could he but speak—might have disclosed a good deal. The Pup, had yellowish eyes, and if you looked into them steadily, you encountered a gaze of bland benevolence, tempered with extraordinary cunning, and self-esteem.

Daly's god was money—the more he accumulated, the less he parted with. His banking book—for *he* was no believer in stockings, or tea-pots—would have opened the eyes, and mouths, of his acquaintances had they been privileged to glance into its contents. Everything in his mind tended to the heaping up of riches—although he had no views or intentions respecting the destination of his hoard. He had battled long and sorely in the attempt to keep his daughter from attending school—pleading distance, weather, illness, and lack of escort. John was unrivalled at making excuses—were they not part and

parcel of the egg trade?—the girl was too useful at home—she could not well be spared. As a child of ten, she accomplished the work of a full-grown woman—at twenty, the work of a man and a boy. Occasionally she had obtained brief snatches of schooling, learnt a little English, a little reading, and a little sewing—also she picked up the acquaintance of other children as, barefoot, they pattered to and fro,—and gathered, that there was a world outside the Cross, the school, and even beyond Hoggarty's farm above the chapel!

Johanna grew up in total ignorance of many things—of the power of her own beauty first of all, of writing, arithmetic, or the faintest elements of geography, history, or worldly wisdom. Her father set his face against her speaking English, or “denying” her own tongue—and any English she knew, was liable to be frightened out of her head the moment she encountered strangers. Nevertheless Johanna had some accomplishments; she could drive a hard-mouthed ass, she could dig, and knit, and bake and sing—and in all the glens there was no better weaver than Shevauneen (Irish for Johanna) Daly. She was an honest, self-contained, pious girl, who believed in Father Duiggan and St. Joseph—and adored the

Blessed Virgin, and Shamus McCarthy. Thanks to her ignorance and industry, it happened, that although the beautiful Shevauneen was renowned from Valentia to Killarney, she was but rarely seen—save on Sunday, in the bare whitewashed chapel on the Kenmare Road. And little did she guess, as she knelt in prayer, with her hood over her head, and her beads in her hand, that many and many a boy, had walked miles over the hills—or up from the shore—just as much “to get a look at Daly’s daughter” as to hear the Mass.

CHAPTER II

IT is pretty widely known, that in Kerry the matches are made up, without the smallest regard for the wishes or inclinations of the happy (?) pair—it is strictly a business question of cows, pound notes, and pigs, not of mere foolish personal attraction. Marriages are invariably arranged between the parents of the boy and girl—with the aid of a professional “go-between,” or “Fostooke”; and in weighing all the pros and cons,—with the accompaniment of shouts, protestations, invocations, and a liberal supply of porter,—the claims of a stout jennet—or even a flock of geese—have a better chance of consideration, than such ridiculous “balderdash” as love at first sight—or, indeed, any love at all!

Of course if a young man could obtain a notoriously handsome girl, with a fine fortune, well and good. The colleen herself was a marvel for management and behaviour (and had as was well known, put up a quantity of the very best feathers)—

in short, she was in all respects a highly desirable wife. Many an "account" was sent for, and many a weary, thankless tramp, had Ninny Quain—the lame matchmaker—up the Dalys' boreen. And she invariably returned with the same sad story—"Johnny would offer no fortune whatever!"

Such an attitude was unprecedented—such an announcement was unparalleled. Why, the very poorest gave a couple of pound notes, and even Scanlan—the travelling tinker—had bestowed a wheelbarrow, a silk umbrella, and a couple of fine turkeys along with his girl. True, the envious declared, that the dowry was stolen; but, anyhow—stolen or not—Scanlan had some dacency, and some pride! At last old Timothy Laffan—a contractor who kept a public in Sneem—offered for Johanna, and no fortune at all! and him being very well to do, with a slated house, and a side car. But Johanna had laughed scornfully, and even John would not agree—at no price. *What* was to be done with a chap like that? and him the father of the finest girl in Kerry! In all her active experience—extending over a period of forty years—Ninny had never come across his equal.

The truth was, that John Daly was too sensible of his child's value, to relinquish her to anyone.

Who would mind the house, and dig, and milk, and work as she did? Moreover, her earnings came to a considerable amount—he pocketed all the fowl and butter money, and the half of her profits on every piece of tweed. No, no, he was too much attached to the child to part with her—and piteously declared that the separation would break his heart. Now Ninny Quain—as became her business—was a pertinacious character. She did not relinquish her efforts to secure a husband for Johanna, without a protracted struggle. Old Tim had promised to make it “well worth her while” if she brought off a match between the beauty and himself. So in despite of the girl’s derisive laugh—and her father’s blunt refusal—Ninny Quain made her way up the boreen one soft July afternoon, nominally in search of a stray goat. Near the village of ruins, she met no less a person than Shamus McCarthy—swinging his stick, and whistling like a blackbird—who passed her with a careless nod. Ninnie stood for a moment leaning on her crutch, and watching him out of sight. A tall, lithe, well-set-up figure, covering the ground with a light, springy step. Presently a turn hid him from view—and the Fostooke resumed her walk, with a vindictive expression on her yellow, withered face.

Shamus McCarthy, with his curly head, and impudent blue eyes, was just the boy to ruin her plans, and raise a rebellion among all the young women in the barony!

It was not long before Ninny presented her wrinkled visage at the Dalys' half-door—where she announced herself as “heart broke and bet up.” By great good fortune she was just in time for a share of soda cake, and a cup of tea, and Johanna—ever hospitable—received the old woman as an honoured guest.

Very gradually, and cautiously, the Fostooke led the conversation round to Shamus McCarthy. Now it had been whispered, that Shamus was the only boy who had ever received the smallest encouragement from Johanna—and where was the girl that could resist him? Certainly not in the parish of Upper Ierna. He was a handsome fellow, well made—and graceful, lithe as a greyhound—active as a cat. He could walk forty miles at a stretch—he could row all day long without distress—he had a pleasant word and a joke, for man, woman, or child—and he could dance down any boy in the barony! Besides all these attractions, he was endowed with a pair of merry blue eyes, a head of fair, curly hair, and a smile that would coax the very birds out of the bushes.

It must be confessed that Shamus had the reputation of being "a bit wild," and fond of fighting—as well as a sup of porter, and the girls—and many a girl was fond of Shamus. Some he courted in public, others on the sly—and, alas! among these latter was Johanna Daly. Openly he paid his addresses to Maggie Leary—a plain, high-shouldered woman, with a large fortune. On Sunday morning Shamus would walk with Maggie home from Mass in the sight of all men—and women—but the self-same evening, would find him perched on a wall, among the ruins, with his hat on the back of his head, a flower in his coat, wheedling the heart out of Johanna's breast!

After this long digression let us return to Johanna and Tim Laffan's emissary.

"An' will ye not be talking to me of Timothy Laffan, Mrs. Quain," cried the girl impatiently. "I can't abide a man that has buried two wives."

"Is that so, acushla?" she rejoined with a wheezy laugh, "anyhow he giv' each of them an elegant funeral, and he is no worse than a boy that has courtin' twenty girls, down to the axin'!"

"Augh, sure none ever done the like of that!" protested Johanna. "Let me give you a sup more tay—it's got strength in it yet?"

"Yes, dear," holding out her cup, "I wish to God, I was half as strong! I hear as Shamus McCarthy does be often up this road."

"Oh, is that so?" replied Johanna indifferently, but her heart was thumping.

"To be sure, it is so," returned Ninny, "and don't you know it? Sure the boreen goes nowhere but here—and 'tis here he comes!"

"He comes to see me father."

"Holy Biddy! And is that what he calls it? Bedad, he is a great schamer—that fellow has a rag on every bush."

"Oh, is that so?" repeated the girl, with laboured nonchalance.

"Sure, hadn't I two matches made up for him, and he broke out of them both! He has no shame. I declare to God me heart was scalded with him. First he is crazy on wan girl—then he is mad after another!"

"And who is he after now?" inquired Johanna, very white and stern.

"If ye come to the dance at the Cross on Sunday, ye will see for yourself. Faix, he favours half the girls about—but the one he is going to *marry* is Maggie Leary."

"Maggie!" repeated Johanna, "why, nonsense, woman alive! She is well up for thirty!"

"Thirty-two last Shrove," acknowledged Ninny, as she stirred her tea, "but she's a nice, clean-looking girl, she has three hundred pounds in Tralee Bank, and has her old uncle's life well insured, and more again coming to her—and she is just cracked crazy after Shamus."

"And—Shamus?" Johanna's voice was tremulous.

"Bedad, a rich wife would answer him finely! He is more on for play, than work. Sure, he spends all his money on clothes, and drink, and divilment!"

"'Tis a lie!" said Johanna fiercely. "He may amuse himself—and why wouldn't he?—but he works hard, terrible hard, and Captain De Renzi never had a better keeper. And 'tis well known, that when his father went out of his senses, it was them children—Shamus, and his sister and brother—as minded the farm, and worked it like grown people and black naygurs. They were the talk of the parish—ask the Doyles, or anybody—and when McCarthy came out of the asylum he was not a bit of use, and isn't he still going about the world wearing a thing like a fish on his head, and calling himself, a sea trout? But Shamus and Dan worked the place, and kept

a dacent home for their mother"—and she paused solely from lack of breath.

"Augh, and now Dan has the good wife *I* got him," continued the other complacently, "he can manage the place alone. Indeed, it's not every young woman as would go home, and live in the house with a man that's a sea trout—however harmless—but Bridgie was always reasonable—not like *others!*" she added with a bitter significance. "There was Shamus sister, she would marry a soldier—in spite of all as was said—and went off out of the country owing me two shillings. Oh, she was a nice piece of furniture, *she* was! as wild, and as tricky as her brother."

"'Tis very plain you are no friend to him," cried Johanna passionately.

"I'm not saying that at all," calmly rejoined Mrs. Quain. "It's meself as is his best friend, if he will lave it to me. I'll get him a good wife, and fortin, the same as his brother. I'll go bail that Shamus hasn't a pound in the wide world—he's all for spending, and a fortin he must have."

Johanna made no reply, but rose, and began to put away the tea-things.

"Sure, now, it's the greatest nonsense in the wide world—fine young boys wanting to be married to

slips of girls," announced the visitor in a high, querulous key, "especially when older, settled women, are to had for the axin'. And girls, the same! Sure, *you'd* be far better with Timothy Laffan, and your own car, and servant, and no need to wet a finger, than married to some gossoon, spending your time cutting turf, and rearing children!"

"I see! Your plan is to marry the ould women to the young men, and the girls to the old dotards," cried Johanna. "As for cutting turf, I do that *now*, and am none the worse of it."

"Well, signs on it, you're a hard-working colleen, and a credit, and so I always say—but the boys is not that industrious. I'll not deny as Shamus McCarthy can work, when he *likes*—and before his brother got married, he was eager enough. But now he has a situation he is as idle as any. Sure, 'tis only a gentleman's job—caring for birds and hares; and mind you wan thing, Johanna," she continued, in a key of warning, "there's madness among the McCarthys."

"That's another lie," rejoined Johanna. "Sure all the world knows that it was a crack of a stone on the head, that he got in a fight, that moidered old Larry."

"Is that what they tell ye? I met McCarthy meself—late one night when the moon was shining—and I give ye me word, I've never been the same colour ever since—and its five years come September. Faix, I wonder what Shamus' wife will think of him?"

"Ye talk a power about Shamus, Mrs. Quain, how do ye know he is thinking of a wife at all?"

"Well, he is courtin' anyhow, and if ye will come to the Cross on Sunday, as I tell ye, you can see him with your own two eyes."

"Oh, he may court every girl between this and Cork for all *I* care," retorted Johanna, who was emulating the Spartan boy and fox, though she had never heard the legend, and was washing up the two china cups and saucers with tremulous, but deliberate, care.

"Sure, don't I know that, dearie," rejoined the Fostooke, reaching back for her cloak, "he's as slippery as an eel. But I can tell you wan thing—as a mortal secret—he has made up his mind to take Maggie Leary," and she nodded her head sagaciously, "sure, hadn't they their picter took together last week?"

. Crash! went a beautiful pink tea-cup on the hard flags.

"Oh, lor, see there now!" screamed Mrs. Quain, "if it isn't in twenty pieces."

"Bad cess to it, it slipped through my hand," said Johanna, stooping to pick up the bits.

"Won't your da be dancing mad?"

"No, Mrs. Quain," straightening herself. "It's me own. I bought it off a travelling cart this time last year."

"Augh, I see, towards setting up house. He! he! he! One is gone! I hope nothing will happen the comrade of it. Well, now! I must be off. I'll see ye at the Cross on Sunday, me jewel."

"Augh, sure I've no time, Mrs. Quain, and I'm no good at a dance!"

"Well, anyway, ye may spare half an hour to look on—that won't hurt ye?" (little she knew!) "I'll tell Timmy Laffan you'll be there—he, he, he!" and with a pious "God save ye!" the match-maker pushed open the half-door, and took her departure. As she hobbled briskly down the lane, Mrs. Quain rested more than once upon her crutch, and gave vent to her satisfaction, in a little cackling laugh.

CHAPTER III

SUNDAY came—but Johanna's anxieties had surrendered to her pride—her pride would not suffer her to go to the cross-roads in the character of a mere looker-on, or a spy on Shamus. No, Shamus would come up some evening, and then she would have it out with him! and with this determination she remained at home.

Two weary weeks dragged by, yet Shamus did not appear. He was not at Mass, and Johanna was so isolated she heard no "talk" and no news—there was nothing to distract her tormenting thoughts, no sympathetic soul to speak to, and the poor girl was nearly distracted with suspense and misery. She ventured down to the Cross, but Mary was in the town and her mother was hay-making (on a kind of oasis in the bog two miles away). Johanna retraced her steps in a desperate frame of mind, resolved to face the worst on Sunday. When Sunday came she dressed herself in a new pink cotton gown, wound her black hair

carefully round her head, put on her mother's blue cloak, and set forth accompanied by her father (who had an eye to a stroke of business). When they arrived at the well-beaten Cross, they found that the dancing was going forward with much spirit. The pair stood back among the crowd, most of which were seated on the grass banks on either side of the scene of action. By craning their necks the Dalys could see that six couples were footing it vigorously, in time to a fiddler and concertina, who were playing "Peter Street," and conspicuous among these dancers, was Shamus and Maggie Leary. Maggie in purple merino, trimmed with silk velvet, her hair in a streaky fringe—Maggie crimson and hideous, the effect of her desperate exertions, but still firmly resolved not to flag—Shamus moving his neat and nimble limbs without the least apparent effort. The fiddler played wildly, the dancers' feet beat steadily, couples whirled, the crowd yelled "Go it, Thady!" "More power, Shamus!" At last Maggie, nearly as purple as her gown, collapsed, and Shamus snatched at a pretty bystander, set her before him, and started as if afresh. The pair danced, the fiddler screamed encouragement, the spectators yelled "That's the boy for ye!" and all the time pale Johanna in the background looked on—

grave-eyed, detached, splendid. The effect of her beauty was the more striking because her pose was so entirely free from effect and self-consciousness. Gradually it began to be whispered, that Daly and his daughter, were among the crowd, but not before she had seen Shamus kiss a pretty, giggling girl, and fan his purple partner with his straw hat. No, no, the Shamus of the secluded boreen, was not this bold, boisterous young man. By - and - by he noticed all eyes being turned in one direction—the presence of the beautiful, dowerless Johanna ever made a sensation that many a London belle might envy. Yes, there, by the powers of Moll Kelly, was Johanna herself, looking like an embodied conscience—and there were three chaps making up to her already, Barny Brady, Tim Laffan, and a soldier on furlough—no less! And small wonder, when she took the shine out of every woman present. Shamus, who had no shyness in his composition, edged his way into the group, but his lady-love would not even vouchsafe to see him. At last he boldly compelled her attention.

“Well, Miss Daly, it’s meself that’s proud to see you among us,”

“Proud!”

"Ay, and pleased."

"Faix, 'tis easy to please some people."

"And, 'tis easy to *dis*please others, for nothing at all at all. May I offer you a glass of lemonade?"

"No, thank you."

"Will you dance this reel with me?"

"No."

"Then can I find you a sate?"

Maggie Leary, aware of her own dishevelled appearance, her torn gown, her fringe resembling wet rats' tails, looked on from afar with jealous eyes, whilst Johanna, the egg-huckster's daughter, treated Shamus,—the gallant of the county,—as if she were a queen and he the dirt under her feet!

"Well, I don't care if I do sit down," she muttered, and as they drew aside and he found her a place a little aloof, "I see you are out with me, darlin'," he whispered, "but, sure, I'm only playing the fool."

"Yes, that's plain enough," she retorted.

"And what's the harm?"

"Oh, none at all! I saw you kissing Biddy Kane."

"Sure, why wouldn't I kiss any girl as would let me? and as for that matter, weren't you standing cheek by jowl with ould Tim! I declare he couldn't take his eyes out of ye!"

"Ould Tim makes me curl over, whenever he comes near me."

"But *I* don't, darlin', now do I?"

"Ah, now go off to your intended," cried Johanna drawing away, "she's looking this way now, and faix, Shamus, for your sake, I hope her looks are the *worst* of her!"

"Johanna, will ye quit talking nonsense!" he cried indignantly, "sure ye know there's no truth in that story."

"I hear many a story, and they can't all be lies."

"Do you suppose I'd tie myself to a walking bonfire like Maggie? Will ye meet me at the old town to-morrow at seven o'clock?"

"I wouldn't go to say as I would."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Sure, nothing at all."

"If you're thinking of Maggie, I wouldn't marry her if she was hung in diamonds."

"I know nothing of diamonds—but she wasn't at the back of the door when the tongues was give out."

"No, nor the noses either."

"And what about Lizzie Sullivan?"

"She's not plazin' to me either; she has a neck as thick as a man's, and a very bould eye."

"And who does plase ye, Shamus McCarthy?"

"Why ye know right well, 'tis only yourself, me darlin'."

"Now what's the use of humbugging like that, and coming up the boreen to sluther and blather me?—when ye think ye have me safe at home, ye carry on with every girl in the country."

"Come now—I may carry on, and I'm not for denying it."

"Yer not!" she replied.

"No, I'm only amusin' myself, like the gentry—and all the time there's only wan, I wish to carry off to be my wife."

"Yes, and that's Maggie—with the fortin."

"No, but Johanna—with the grey eyes."

"But ye want a wife with money, Mrs. Quain says so—all boys does."

"Mrs. Quain, the ould Fostooke! I wish she was in glory! I'm getting twelve shillings a week, and am half promised a cottage after Christmas. What do ye say if we get married at Shrove?"

Johanna coloured deeply, and before she could reply, she was joined by her father, who said—

"See now, look sharp, me girl, I'm for home. I've an early round to-morrow. I'm just after getting

a promise of eight dozen at fivepence from Mrs. Murphy, and I'll take her on the hop, and be there to-morrow by breakfast-time."

Thus Johanna, the beautiful, was hurried away, without giving her promise—thanks to the exigencies of the egg trade.

CHAPTER IV

BUT Shamus was not to be put off in such summary fashion. When Johanna rose to her feet he also sprang up, and followed her and her father down the mossy bank and into the crowd. John Daly walked ahead, his furrowed countenance, beaming with the memory of his recent bargain. Johanna came next, her face illuminated also, but—with another emotion, far from the greed of money; beside her walked Shamus, with a radiant smile—and reckless bearing. The people made a little lane for them, as they passed through—the handsomest pair for miles, and miles, around.

And now a curious, and a never-forgotten scene occurred. Where the gathering had thinned, on the edge of the crowd, stood Maggie and her uncle Mick. Her colour had faded to a dimmer shade, but she still looked ugly, ill-tempered, and excited. She was waiting for Shamus, and intended to have it out with him, then and there! How dared he throw

her over, and neglect her, for the egg-huckster's daughter? a great hulking creature—who wore common knitted stockings, and had never had a hat on her head!

“Shamus—look here!—Shamus! stop, can't ye!” she challenged. Yes, and everyone around stared and listened. Maggie was so carried out of herself that she cared not if all the world was present; her jealousy, her frenzy of love was such, that she brooked no delay. Which was to be this man's choice? the black-haired girl? or herself? She must know *now*—all the world should know now. She came and planted herself directly in front of her victim, and his companion.

“Now, where are ye off to, Shamus?” she demanded, and her voice was shrill and harsh. “Sure, aren't you coming home to tay with us? Ye'r not—not going to throw me over, are ye?”

“Is it me throw ye over? Oh, no, Miss Leary,” replied Shamus gallantly, “there's plenty of time between now, and seven o'clock—and I'm just going a bit of the way with Johanna Daly, and her father.”

“Oh, as for her father, he can find his way home by this time!” cried the woman with heaving breath, “and Miss Daly, by all accounts, is unused to company——” Then between her teeth—

"You come with *me*, Shamus—one word's enough—you come with me *now*."

Johanna, who instinctively foresaw a scene, in the air of Maggie, and in the dozens of amused eyes, walked on—with her stately head held high.

"Do ye hear," she hissed, "I'll go no shares with another woman,—it's her—or me."

"Arrah, don't be making a holy show of yourself, Maggie," expostulated the young man, "and lave hold of my coat, ave ye plase."

"Are ye going with Johanna?" she demanded, and her eyes blazed.

"I am—so."

"Then, *go*!" and she gave him a violent push—"I've done with you," and she fell back among the crowd, many of whom had understood the scene though the words had not come to their ears. There was Maggie, her face like a boiled mangel-wurzel, dragging at Shamus, and barging, and carrying on, to keep him back from Johanna Daly. Yes, it was all betwixt Johanna and her; between love and money—love had won; for there stood Maggie spluttering and muttering to her uncle, and gnawing her lips, and there went Shamus, after Johanna—running. He was not long in overtaking her, and

as the lovers walked together up the lane, they trod on air.

Yes, there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream! especially when it succeeds a nightmare of uncertainty. Timmy Laffan and Maggie Leary both had their uses. As they strolled up the familiar boreen, the exquisite surroundings, made a suitable background for the picturesque pair. They were a couple to stir even the most stolid to admiration—tall, handsome, young, happy—but not a couple to the taste of Mrs. Quain. As they talked of their future—of the promised lodge among the arbutus and ash trees, and of how, with that and twelve shillings a week, and an odd rabbit or a trout, they would be grand!

Shamus had some savings—he did not spend all his money on drink and divilment. He had seven pounds in the post office. Johanna, too, had her own little purse, and “I make a good bit with weaving and eggs, and so on,” she announced with a tremulous smile, “but me da takes it.”

“He won't be too well pleased to spare you, Johanna. What will he do at all, at all?”

“I really don't know. You'll have to talk to him, Shamus.”

"He might marry."

"Oh, don't be making fun of the poor man; sure, who would marry the likes of him?"

"He is not too old, and they say he is rich, though he is awfully wizened and don't knock much life out of his money."

"No, and he'll give me no fortune, Shamus."

"Ye're a fortune yerself, me darlin'."

"What put marrying in your head so sudden-like?"

"Timmy Laffan, I believe, and Maggie, for he was bent on marrying you, and the other was making great shapes at me—so the best thing I could think of, was to put meself out of harm's way—and here's the boneens running to meet ye. Everything loves ye, me darlin, even the pigs!"

"Maggie Leary does not love me. She'd poison me herself—she struck me with a look this day. And Shamus, what was all that she kept ye back to tell ye?"

"Oh, she was asking me to tay."

"Faix, she said more than that."

"Well, then, she was asking me which it was to be—her or you?"

"Oh, Shamus!"

"Yes, I'd a fine contract to get shot of her—she

made a terrible show of herself. She was that mad, she didn't know *what* she was saying."

Never in all their lives had this couple walked so slowly—not arm in arm, but far apart, in the prudish Irish fashion. Now they lingered to pick a bit of heather, again to gather a wild rose, or a few bilberries, —to gaze gravely upon the scene, as if to stamp this transcendent moment on their minds. The towering mountains, half clad in green and purple, the clear brown splashing stream, the clumps of broom, furze and fuchsia; sometimes they even paused to contemplate one another—eye to eye. The very air they breathed, seemed charged with happiness. At last they reached the cabin, and found that John, impatient of delay, had made tea and warmed up some bread.

"What in the name of patience kept ye, girl?" he called out querulously; and then he saw Shamus, who calmly replied—

"It was a fine evening, and—we didn't hurry ourselves."

"Ye needn't tell me *that*, but now ye are here, come in and have a cup of tay," said Daly hospitably, "and maybe we will rob Johanna of some of her honey!"

Little did the poor man suspect, that his gay, good-looking visitor was about to rob him of Johanna herself!

Tea was a pleasant meal, and Shamus, as the guest, was distinguished by being given the pretty little pink cup.

"'Tis one of Johanna's," explained her parent, who was pleased with any choice thing for which *he* had not to pay.

The dance at the Cross, and the chances of shooting, were amiably discussed, and, by-and-by, when the place was "redd up," Daly went to see after a sick calf, and Johanna accompanied Shamus some way down the boreen; in the moonlight, and there by the old fairy thorn bushes, they exchanged their first kiss. The moon stared with chilling serenity, but the thorn bushes whispered and approved. They had been young themselves.

CHAPTER V

IT had been agreed between Shamus and his betrothed, that no word of their marriage should come to Daly's ears, until the great question of the gate lodge was definitely arranged. The Captain had offered it in his pleasant joking way, and said "Shamus, my boy, you shall have the house, provided you bring home a pretty wife."—"It was when we were shooting woodcock last winter, and he had a bit of lunch and a fire in the lodge. He is a terrible chap for joking and fun; but I'm sure he would not go back on his word, and I know he thinks well of me!"

Johanna nodded her head in simple acquiescence. Where was the man or woman that would not think well of Shamus?

* * * * *

Johanna's little room was up in the roof, and reached by a ladder from the kitchen; its one small four-panel window in the gable, resembled a watchful eye ever looking into the breen. The creeper

outside, occasionally tapped sharply, when the wet west wind came rioting down the glen, and awoke the girl from her deep sleep, but there was no need for the creeper to tap to-night—Johanna could not sleep, she was far too happy.

Nolan's—at the Cross, was a sort of general shop, and house of call. Two crossed clay pipes, and a jar of white peppermints were exhibited in the window. Within was a counter, a few shelves, and here you could buy a loaf of baker's bread, a twist of tobacco, a box of matches, or a red herring. Small cotters brought eggs, and exchanged them for provisions. Here Daly sold the butter his daughter made, for he generally preferred to manage monetary concerns himself. Monday he was absent till night-fall; also Tuesday, and Wednesday. Johanna for once felt intolerant of the solitude—the mere tinkling of the river, or the call of a curlew. She had told her news to the pup, to the black heifer (the pigs knew it already), and she yearned to impart it to some sympathetic human soul. She would not see Shamus again till Sunday, still she might hear of him, and speak of him; so on Thursday afternoon, when all the housework was done, the cows milked, the place “redd up,” she walked off down to the

Cross, ostensibly to buy a spool of white cotton, in reality to see Mary, and to talk about Shamus McCarthy.

It was an exquisite August day. The sun blazed on her black head, the deep soft blue sky was without one cloud. Johanna entered the shebeen, hoping to have the good fortune to find her friend alone. Mary was a thin, narrow-chested girl, with bright red hair and many freckles — but good-natured, popular, of ready wit, and Johanna's chief friend. True that Mary was clever, and could read, and write and figure. She had been in the third book, whilst the beauty was struggling hopelessly with words of three letters.

"Well, Johanna, and what way are ye?" she inquired. As she spoke, she was busily engaged in counting and sorting loaves, and muttered, "Mrs. Kenny, Tim Beamish, Sally Flynn, His Reverence," as she put them aside one by one.

"I've just come in for a spool of cotton, and a bit of a chat," replied the girl gravely, eyeing two middle-aged countrywomen, who were lounging on the settle, and had dropped in at Nolan's on their way from the town.

"It's a lonely life ye have up there," remarked

Mrs. Kane, whose head was muffled in a plaid shawl, and who held a black bottle on her knee.

"Ye may well say so," exclaimed Mary, in the midst of her counting.

"Faix, if it was *me*, yer father had in it, Johanna, I'd go out of me seven senses, and I tell him that every time I see him."

"But judging by looks 'tis a gran' place for the health," observed Mrs. Tilly, a wheezy little woman, with a frilled cap on her head. "Now I'm getting me health very badly these times, and them doctors is no good. I've been in to the wan to the dispensary, on a ticket, and he give me a box of pills. Now if there's wan thing in the wide world me stomach (saving yer presence) rises at, 'tis a pill."

"But they does ye a power of good!" argued Mrs. Kane in the checked shawl. "I had a box last Christmas that put the life into me, I tell you. I can spake well for pills. But now what I can't bear, is a bottle—'tis a bottle he giv' me this time, to take after meals." Here she uncorked the specimen in her hand, and smelt its contents with profound distrust.

"I think I'll throw it behind the ditch," she announced, after a stimulating pause.

"Ah, not at all, woman, dear," cried her companion, "give it here to me. Sure, I'll swop it for the pills—and kindly welcome."

"Is that the way wid ye? Then here, all right," agreed Mrs. Kane, and she thrust the bottle into her neighbour's ready hand.

"Did ye hear of Micky Lee, and what he done on a red ticket?" said Mrs. Tilly, addressing the company.

Mary Nolan shook her head, and Johanna remained dumb. She had not come all the way down to the Cross, to listen to this sort of talk and trash about "red tickets."

"Well, then, it's a good joke, and I'll tell yees," resumed the speaker. "Ye know Micky, a terrible boy for wakes, and drink, and yet never what ye may call, *out* of his senses. The other night he was late in the town—a terrible wet night it was, as black as a well—and the rain coming down in rivers. So he cast about him, *how* to get home at all?—seven miles, you know, on a bog road, and deep-water dikes on both sides. Well, he goes to Tim Kelly, and gets him to loan him a red ticket, so with this he went off to Dr. Moore, the dispensary doctor, and rings him up as bold as brass—it was after twelve—

and calls out he has a red ticket, and his wife stretched — and no time to lose. So the doctor, awfully put about, had to rise and dress in the middle of the night, get out his horse and car, and it teeming rain av course, he could do no less than offer Micky a sate—and Micky got druv home, the same as any gentleman! But when they got there, and herself opens the door, as well as I am, oh but the doctor was wild—it was just dancing mad, he was.”

“’Twas a shame, faix,” said Mary.

“Ah,” exclaimed Mrs. Kane, with indescribable scorn, “sure, and aren’t they paid for it, me darlin’?”

“Well, Dr. Moore made an awful talk and row, and said he’d report Micky to the committee, but Micky only laughed till he hadn’t an eye in his head.”

“When he’s sick in *earnest*, he’d better not be sending for Dr. Moore I’m thinking,” said Mrs. Kane, as she packed away her box of pills, “though Dr. Moore and me is two.”

“How’s that?” questioned Mary.

“When me mother was living, I had him out, and he trated me badly. She was awful failed, in herself—and says he—

“‘The woman can’t be properly nursed here—in this smoky cabin—she must go into the infirmary at wance—do yer understand?’

“Well, av course, that was easy talkin’, but me mother had her own notions and so had I! There was the bed she was born in under her, and Daffy Chute giving her bog-apple tay—and that with a sup of vinegar, was regarded a sure cure for the bronchitis. Howsomever she got raal bad, and I had him out agin, and when he came he was leppin out of his skin.

“‘Why didn’t you send the woman into town as I bid you?’ he bawls. ‘She’s too far gone now!’

“‘Well, maybe yer honour would lend out the infirmary carriage.’

“‘No,’ says he, ‘I’ll have nothing to say to it now. If ye move her at all—it must be on yer own responsibility.’

“‘And what sort of a machine is that?’ says I. ‘Sure, *we* have nothing but an old asses’ car!’

“‘Yer a fool!’ says he, and with that he bounced out of the house.

“Me mother died two days after—she was best in her own place—and when all was said and done it was handier for the wake—and the berryin’.”

"That's so," agreed her friend, "and it was an elegant wake ye had in it."

"Was there anything stirring in town?" inquired Mary.

"There's a good market. I sold my fowl, young wans, fifteenpence the couple. There's a lot of company come to the New Hotel, and I hear talk of a great dance the night ere last at Tracy's. Well, now, we must be taking the road and I'm going. Good day to yees, Mary. Good day, Johanna," pausing for a moment. "What ails ye, girl? I declare ye look handsomer than ever!"

And with this encomium, Mrs. Kane shuffled out, followed by her companion.

"And now we are shut of them two heart scalds," said Mary, "what's the news, Johanna? for I'm sure by your looks, ye have something on yer mind. Yer eyes, are like a dog's, that's found some friend!"

"Arrah! and where would I get news?" demanded the visitor, her heart bursting with joy, and eagerness. She was about to unfold her tale, when Mary cried—

"Faix, that's true, I was not minding, and here's the boy that will tell us every word that's going on in three counties, and that's Andy Leary, the car driver."

An outside car, had halted at the Cross, and a clean-shaven, little man leapt off, and skipped into the shop, whip in hand, leaving an unkempt-looking bay colt to take care of itself, and the vehicle.

"Morrow, girls!" he began genially. "Mary, acushla, sixpennyworth of twist, and a box of matches. Johanna, I wish I was a young man, for your sake!"

"How do you know that Johanna would look at you?" inquired Mary, as she dived for a knife, "maybe she has a boy of her own?"

"Oh," glancing at Johanna, who was seated on a meal sack, "I'm aware that half the chaps in the barony, is mad about her. Yer a splendid big girl, asthore! May ye take up as much room in heaven! And talking of boys, did ye hear of the awful work there was over at Tracy's ere last night?"

"Ah, how would we hear anything?" retorted Mary, as she hunted for matches, "we get no more news hereabouts, than the sweepings of a candlestick."

"They say, it began with Thady O'Rourke, and Shamus McCarthy, having high words about a girl—at Tracy's dance—and I believe, by me oath, 'twas *yerself*!" suddenly wheeling round to Johanna, who

had all at once become rigid,—though the blood was racing through her veins.

“Me!” she protested, with horror in her eyes.
“Arrah. Go on!”

“Yes, and why not? Many a man has had his head, and his heart, broke over a handsome woman.”

“What’s it all about?” asked Mary Nolan.

“Bedad, the story is, that the three O’Rourkes, the two Flannagans, and Peter Flood laid in wait for Shamus McCarthy, to bate him on his way home, over the new land, and Hooligan’s farm. The six of them, chased him acrost the field——”

Johanna’s face was now livid.

“But, sure, ye know Shamus can run like a hare, and when he come to the great boundary, by me soul he leaped it, sixteen foot of water if there’s a sup! Tim and Thady Rourke got through somehow—swimming or wading—the others ran round by the bridge, and ’tis a long round itself. Then as fer Tim and Thady, sure didn’t Shamus wait for them, as wor so far ahead of the others, and he took them wan by wan, as they come up, and half-killed Thady—anyhow he left him for dead, just stretched out in Coffey’s field, and he mauled Tim, so as his own mother wouldn’t know him, and then made off, up into the mountains.”

"And why would Shamus make off? Sure the others was in fault?" was Mary's shrill question.

"Bedad, the polis was out all yesterday, after Shamus; but they might as well try to catch a golden eagle. There's not a part of the country he does not know better nor his prayers."

"And Thady?" gasped Johanna, her face wrung with emotion.

"The priest was sent for yesterday; he is about half-dead, but has speech in him still. He makes out, there's a woman in it, at the bottom of the whole business, but that's *av course*. She had a spite against Shamus, and she made up to the O'Rourkes, to give him a great lathering, and spoil his beauty, but it was the other way on, ye see. He has knocked half Timmy O'Rourke's teeth into his digestion, and beat the brother to flittergigs. Oh, faix, he's the broth of a boy for fighting and courtin'—'tis in the Imperial Army, *he* had a right to be!"

"And it's more than likely, he will be jailed up, if the polis catch him," said Mary.

"Ye may say so, tho' he is very thick with them. Still, business is business—or duty. They are away up watching Larry McCarthy's house, and if they nab Shamus, which is a chancy thing, Dennis Brady,

the poacher fellow, will surely get his keeper's situation on Captain De Renzi's estate."

"And will ye tell us, who was the woman that had the ill-will to Shamus?" inquired Mary, after a pregnant silence.

"Faith! 'twould be hard to say, for as far as *I* know, he has the goodwill of everything in petticoat, between this and the Junction—so much for a laughing eye and a dancing foot! But now, when I come to think of it"—he paused in the act of filling his pipe, "There—bad scran to her for an impatient divil—she's off!" and he ran out just in time to see his mare, with trailing reins, gallop away down the road, amid a smother of white dust.

* * * * *

"Well, doesn't that bate all, Johanna?" said Mary as they stood in the door, and watched Andy running at the top of his speed, "I mean about Shamus, Johanna. Laws! whatever ails ye, girl? Are ye took bad?"

"Oh, Mary," leaning back against the door-post with a gasping shudder, "do you think he will—be hanged—if Thady dies?"

"Is it Shamus? Not at all, girl. They have to

catch him first. So"—after a long pause, "that's the way with ye, Johanna Daly, is it?"

"Shamus—" she paused and struggled with her sobbing breath,—“and me made it up last Sunday, and I come here, to tell ye all about it—when—when——”

"Yes, when Andy come in, with another sort of news. Does yer father know?"

"No, we laid out not to tell anyone till Shamus got the lodge for certain, and he was expecting to know by next Sunday."

"Ay, and last Sunday, now I mind it well, ye were down here, and Shamus too, and Maggie Leary was just fit to poison ye. Oh, she's a nice wan, going clean out of her mind after a boy that didn't look at her. I've got it all plain in me head"—and she folded her arms akimbo. "'Twas Maggie set on them O'Rourkes—they are a sort of cousin. I mind Susie O'Rourke saying that Maggie was talking very bitter o' Sunday, and in an awful ugly humour. 'Twas because Shamus gave her the go-by for *you*, and she was going to pay him out. There's me da coming in—maybe he will have heard tell of it."

Micky Nolan, a tall dark man, with a pair of kind

eyes and a stoop, had just returned from the town, full of the news, and at once proceeded to impart all he had heard, to his two attentive listeners.

"They are saying that Thady has only the breath in him. Old Hagan gives out, as Shamus will get transportation for life."

"Augh, there's no such thing these times," rejoined his daughter, "and who cares for old Hagan, he's too full of law!"

"Well, anyhow, it's a pity the boy ever put a foot inside Tracy's,—but everyone wishes him well."

"I wonder where he is?"

"Up in the Sliev Bloom," replied Nolan. "He'd better come back—and face it down."

"He'd never stand being jailed up. He'd lose the use of himself, and his mind, in jail—being such a rover."

"They say as Maggie is distracted about him. She sent word to the McCarthys, as she will pay for a lawyer."

"It would be the dear payment for Shamus," cried Mary, "and no one will have pity for Thady. He is too fond of man-hunting and bating. Do ye mind the time he took hold of Joe Kelly, the fair day, and him an oldish chap? I was outside Donelly's, and

saw him meeself, how he knocked him agin the wall, and kicked him in the head, and bashed in his face—there was as much yelling and blood around, as if they were after killing pigs! Oh, he's a savage, is Thady. And poor Shamus, what on the living earth will he do at all?"

"Maggie is a terribly excitable sort of girl," said Nolan, "and I believe she's racing over the hills this minute to find him, and hide him!"

"Shamus is a nice, quiet, dacent, aisy-spoken boy," said Mary, "and them O'Rourkes giv' him every provocation. Sure didn't they want to murder him all out, six to wan? Saints among us! but they are the sweepings of creation, and if any of them comes within a hen's race of me, I'll settle him."

"You'll have no chance of that with Thady I'm thinking," said her father, with a lugubrious sigh. "Shamus has settled *him*, and given him his walking papers; and there's been such a terrible lot of batings, and fatal accidents hushed up in these parts, that, by all accounts, it will go hard with the next chap that gets caught. Faix, we must all die, and Shamus is a fine young fellow, and I'd be rale sorry to see the black flag run up for him in Cork jail."

"What does that mean?" asked Johanna, with

trembling, white lips. During the conversation, she had been leaning against the wall as if turned to stone.

"Bedad, me good girl, it's the sign and token to them outside, that a man's after being hanged by the neck till he is dead."

"You don't fear that Shamus——" Here her emotion clutched her by the throat.

"Johanna, I see yer greatly knocked about, but the truth is best in the long run," said Nolan grimly. "If Thady O'Rourke dies, Shamus McCarthy is bound to stretch a rope, they——"

But Johanna had heard enough. With a half-stifled cry she ran out of the cabin.

CHAPTER VI

JOHANNA, pale and haggard, returned home a totally different woman to the girl who had come down the boreen but two hours previously. She walked with a drooping head, and a lagging foot, till she came to the ruins, and there stood still.

These ruins were the mere gables or shells of cottages, whose owners had fled the country the year after the great famine: they were just a cluster of grey stone walls, half overgrown with ivy and Robin round the hedge. It was here, on the stump of a gate pier, that Shamus had often awaited the chance passing of his sweetheart. As she halted at this spot, with two large tears slowly coursing down her face, she started violently, for a shadow seemed to flit from wall to wall, and the object of her thoughts stood before her.

Shamus' frank and handsome young face was gaunt with privation and anxiety. His merry blue eyes looked hollow and sleepless, his very voice was husky and changed, as he said,

"Shevauneen, alannah, I've been watching for ye, and it's not to bid ye good-day I'm here, but good-bye."

"Yes," she faltered, "I know."

"To be sure, bad news travels with hare's feet! Well, I give that chap his earnings, as I see ye have heard below. I went to Tracy's wake, because it was a long promise to Dan Tracy—only for that I'd have been up to see ye, but I never go back on my word, for good or bad."

"Sure, I know that, Shamus."

"Maggie was in it, and she looked at me very ugly. The O'Rourkes were there, and all that crew, and Thady had a drop taken. We got to argufying, but no more than that, and I was off home. I was about half a mile away, when I caught sight of some fellows lying at the back of a ditch, and I knew at wance they were up to no good! So I put on a bit of spurt, and shew! they rose like crows—six of them, no less—all a pack of devil's hounds, hunting one man, and if ye heard the tongue out of them—the bawling and the shouting—'twould terrify ye!"

"Augh, the savages!" ejaculated Johanna.

"Ay, ye may well say so. I bested the divils at the great boundary, but Thady and Tim got over

somehow, and I waited for them, and took them as they came. First Tim—I caught him on the mouth, and giv' him something to bawl for!—and next Thady. Bedad, Johanna!" and he lowered his voice, "I'm afeared I've killed *him*!"

"Yes, they say he is on the last," she stammered, "and, oh, Shamus, darlin', the polis is afther ye."

"They may be afther me, but they'll never catch me alive. I just wanted one word with you. I'm for Queenstown to-morrow, and America the next day; me cousin, Pat Donovan, is in New York, doing finely, and he has often asked me to go out to him. Well, I'm going now."

"And what about your friends here?" inquired the girl tremulously.

"I got home last night, in through the back window, and talked it out with me brother Dan, and took away me savings, for passage money. I'll come back in a couple of years, as rich as a blooded gentleman!"

"But why are ye going at all?" cried Johanna, in a voice of anguish. "Why not stay, and face it out?"

"Yes, and if Thady dies, where am I then? I wouldn't like to see meself hanged like a poacher's

dog! Anyway, I could not stand being jailed up, even for wan day. I'm going away to make a fortune for you, me darlin', and to get shot of Maggie."

"But I don't want no fortin," she sobbed.

"Will ye wait for me, Johanna?"

"That I will so."

"You'll be true to me, me girl, and no matter what is said or done, nor how they work around ye, yer'll never giv' in to old Timothy?"

"Never, as long as there's the breath in me," she answered vehemently, "I swear by the Mother of God."

"Swear it on the cross."

Johanna fumbled at her neck, and drew forth a shabby rosary with its little crucifix. On this she imprinted a fervent kiss.

"And ye will write to me, alannah?" continued the young man.

"Ah, sure I can't write, Shamus!"

"Well, then, ye'll have to get Mollie at the Cross to send me a letter of your words put down on paper."

"She will do so then, and read me what you write. Oh, Shamus, ashore, it's awful to think of you so

clever and learned, and writing a terrible fine hand, and reading any sort of print; and me so ignorant and no more notion of the value of a pen than the pup, and not able to talk to ye across the says, no more than them stones, an' you so smart at everything. Ye won't forget me, will ye?"

"Will I forget the heart in me body?" he cried. "When that stops beating, I may forget ye, but never afore, Shevauneen."

As the pair exchanged vows in the soft Irish tongue, the sun was setting in a glow of pink and gold; beyond the stern and changeless mountains, the shadows were creeping onward, the moment of parting was stealing towards them.

"Oh, if it wasn't so far away, across the water," moaned the girl, with uplifted hands. "'Tis only the other day, I saw a crowd of people, as if they was going to a funeral, and in the middle of them there was an old woman, held on her feet between two others, and just bowed down with grief; and they told me it was not a burying at all they were after—but from seeing a boy away to America. His mother's heart was broke, for she knew she'd never lay an eye on him again. Oh, wirra asthew, and the same grief has come to *me*! Shamus, something

misdoubts me, that we two will never see one another face to face again—that there's awful trouble before us! And this very morning I was so gay, I could hardly feel the grass under me feet, and now——” here the words choked her, and she could not articulate.

“Now, keep up yer spirits, Johanna, me darling. Sure two years will soon roll by,” said Shamus, “we are young yet, with all the world before us. Keep your eye on Maggie. ’Twas she set on them O’Rourkes to half-kill me; and now she’s crazy, and tearing wild to save me, and hide me; cut me head and put a plaster to it! That girl’s a bad egg, and so I tell ye. And, above all, I tell ye to keep *me* in yer mind.”

“And what else would I do, Shamus? Sure ye know me by this time,” and Johanna’s tears fell fast.

“And here I swear,” said Shamus, and his voice shook, “that me heart will beat true to Shevauneen Daly, until the cold clay covers it.” As he spoke, he took the beads which were hanging loosely from Johanna’s hands, and kissed the little cross with impassioned devotion. Then he held Johanna in his arms for one moment, sprang over a low stone wall, and was gone like a dream—alas! as love’s young

dream. To his miserable and stricken sweetheart, the whole glen seemed instantly to become dark and desolate; the sun had been superseded by a soft, melancholy twilight, the atmosphere assumed an impressive stillness—a silence which was presently broken by the rattling of some displaced stones, half-way up the hill, and the sound fell upon Johanna's heart, as the earth upon a coffin.



There was a good deal of wonder and speculation when it became known that Shamus, the heart-breaker, had got clear out of the country, and gone to America. His handsome face, and gay smile, would not be seen in Kerry for many a long day. It was whispered by some little bird that he was pledged to return for Johanna of the Glen, and this news was but ill received by many a girl, and notably by Maggie Leary, who, in spite of all that had come and gone, was still convinced that she would marry Shamus—the young man of her choice, the handsome husband, the fortune-teller had promised her.

Johanna lived beyond the tide of talk; and the gossip, lies, and backbiting, that went far and wide,

somehow never drifted up the boreen. Of course, she knew,—as well as the rest of the world,—that Thady O'Rourke was about again, and all but well—a bit white and “daunchie” in himself—but on the mend for good. The doctors had solemnly declared that for nardness and thickness, Thady's skull was a rare curiosity, and when he died in earnest, should be put up for show in a glass case. Johanna also knew—what was not generally known—that instead of being in New York, Shamus was at a place called Aldershot, where he was learning his drill as a soldier, and was expecting to be sent out with the first drafts (whatever they were !) to a place called the Indies. Johanna was very ignorant, and very poor, but she knew one thing—Shamus was always thinking of her. He had written no less than four letters, and Mary of the Cross had read them out—till she got them off by heart—and, what is more, had answered them for her on beautiful white paper at sixpence a quire ! Without Johanna's permission we will peruse one of her lover's effusions. Shamus had profited by his schooling ; those long, daily tramps in all weathers as a little barefooted gossoon, carrying his book and slate, had had one result—he wrote an excellent hand.

"BLENHEIM BARRACKS,

"ALDERSHOT.

"DEAR JOHANNA,—Ye will wonder what on the living earth I'm doing here? 'Tis a soldier I am, this blessed day—and how I came to be wearing a red coat, and handling a rifle, is as great a surprise to me, as it is to *you*. 'Twas like this—and I'll tell ye no lie, Johanna, now or ever—when I got down to Cork I was just utterly wore out with the walk and the hunger, and I went to a dacent man I know, who keeps a sort of little hotel, and I ate me fill and had, maybe, more whisky than was good for me. On the top of this, in comes a sergeant—a friend of Tim's—and began blathering and bragging and talking, and how if a young fellow wanted to get on, and make his name and fortune, the army was his place. I was a bit moidered, but still I had sense enough to think of you, as a made lady, a captain's wife in silks and gold and feathers, and of meself, having lots of fighting and no fear of jail—or worse. And with that, he drew out a splendid picture of foreign countries, and loot, and tigers, and free shootin'; and he told me on his solemn oath that he often shot a bear himself, and as to the snipe in some parts of the Indies, why, ye couldn't put your foot down, without standing on them!

"Says he, the duty is light, ye have a man to clean

your boots and accoutrements, the climate is cheerful, and there's a big dance, with the regimental band and refreshments, wance a week. Then I thought of all this on one hand, and maybe only a porter's place in New York, carrying loads on me back, or hauling ropes, I considered there was a deal in what the sergeant says, and says I, 'Sergeant, I'm your man!' 'That's the boy,' says he, 'and if ye have any brothers I'd be glad to see them. Ye are just the cut for a soldier, and I'll take as many of your pattern as I can get," and with that he giv' me the shilling.

"I'm afraid, Johanna, ye will be onaisy, but there's no fighting *here*—and not too well satisfied, for we did not think much of soldiers in our parts. And next morning, when I began to look at matters clearly, I was not too well pleased meself, but the deed was done, so I had to make the best of it. What do ye think, I had to go up before a doctor mother naked! I was hoping he'd cast me for that cut on me head, where the hair never grew, after the fight I had with Joe Brannigan; but he took no notice, and I was weighed and measured, bedad, and put on the boat, and packed off to Bristol with a dozen more lads. And here I am, working away at drill and discipline, so as to make an officer's lady of *you*. There's no one to clean me boots, and no dancing to spake of—that's all to come, when we get to the Indies. Also the girls round here would do for scarecrows in

Ireland ; I wouldn't be seen spakin' to one of them. I was nearly forgittin' to tell you that I am in the Donnybrook Fusiliers, the first battalion, and there's a boy from Killorglen in my company, which is Number One, and mind you, Johanna, 'tis the only company I'm keeping. I'm ever true to you, my own Johanna. Don't let on as I'm a soldier, to man or mortal—me brother Dan has to know, for I put him in me 'Small Book.' I'll read ye out what it says:—

“Name, James McCarthy. Enlisted at Cork. At the age of twenty-five years. For the Donnybrook Fusiliers. Height, 5 feet 10 inches. Complexion, fair. Eyes, blue. Hair, curly brown. Marks, scar on head. Religion, Catholic.

“And I remain, yours till death,

“SHAMUS.”

“P.S.—I send ye a gold brooch, and when I go to the Indies ye shall have a chain the twin of it. No more at present. And so Thady is on his legs again, and I'd all that scare for nothing—'tis nine lives he has, the blaggard.”

CHAPTER VII

NOW that Johanna knew that Shamus was safe and well, she was content to wait for his letters, and for him ; counting the days of his absence by rows of black strokes on the wall of her room, and putting the mark of a cross on the festival when she found one of his epistles at the Cross. These were addressed to the care of Mary Nolan. It was twelve long months, since Shamus had enlisted, and his letters—ten in all—were wrapped in a silk handkerchief, and hidden in a hole in the thatch. There had not been one to add to this hoard for months, not since a big troopship had carried the 1st Battalion of “the Donnybrooks” to India. But Johanna was of a slow, patient character, she could bide her time. She also had various precedents to sustain and cheer her. Didn’t Rosie Behan’s boy come home from America, and he away eleven years? and Shamus was vowed to return in two. The number of black strokes on the wall was becoming quite remarkable,

and ran like a chain half-way to the door. One afternoon, as Johanna was returning from the town (where she had been selling a few pairs of extraordinary tame chickens to the hotel), a sudden storm of cold, penetrating rain drove her into a wattle shed near the roadside, and here to her amazement she discovered Ninnie Quain. She had not seen the Fostooke for a considerable time—Ninnie's little cunning eyes were unnaturally bright, and she smelt strongly of whisky.

"Well Shevauneen, asthore," she cried, "an' isn't me wish out! Ye are the very girl I was thinking on."

"Ah, is that so?" answered her companion, with her usual placidity.

"'Tis so, by dad. I've truded up that boreen for some good at last, and time for it."

"It's no use whatever to be talking, Mrs. Quain," said Johanna sharply, "if it's Tim Laffan ye mane. I'd sooner be torn by wild horses, than marry the likes of him."

"Ah, now, be aisy will ye, girlie," protested the old woman, with a grin born of liquor and contempt. "Sure, I'm not thinking of yees at all. Yer not the *only* one as lives up the glen, at the end of the boreen. Isn't there yer father?" and she gave

Johanna a poke in the ribs, that caused her to stagger.

"Now, don't be making game of the poor man," protested his daughter. "Ye must be hard set for a customer, when ye cast an eye on *him*. I declare to goodness, ye make me laugh!"

"I'm glad to hear that, darlin'!" replied Mrs. Quain, with a significant chuckle. "And I suppose ye will split yer two sides, when I tell ye the sober truth." (The truth may have been sober, but its exponent was not.)

"Sure, haven't I," and she gave a little lurch, "got ye a grand stepmamma. I'm afther making up a match with your father—and guess who?"

"Yerself!" cried Johanna, with blazing eyes.

"Ah, not at all, woman alive, but with Maggie Leary!"

Johanna's face changed—her eyes darkened.

"'Tis only yer joke," she stammered, after a moment.

"'Tis only me joke, if ye like," answered the other, "but 'tis a joke as has brought me five gold sovereigns, and a side of bacon. Here"—untying a rag—"ye can see for yerself."

Shevauneen stared with an expression of startled horror at the five pieces of gold—the price of her peace.

"Oh, how could ye go and do such a thing!" she burst out, her whole frame shaken by distress.

"Well, then, dearie, I'll tell ye, and it's this way. Oh, yer not laughing now! he, he! Yer father, 'tis well known, has a lot of money put by—'tis all savings, and no spendings with him—and since he won't give his money with his handsome daughter, I was just bid to do the best I could with his money, and himself! He was willing, when I put it to him. Maggie has three hundred pounds, and furniture, and was awfully eager to have him, and av coorse he wouldn't baulk her! An' why would he?"

"Eager to marry an old man like me father, Mrs. Quain!" cried Johanna, "she must be out of her senses."

"Sorra a bit. Ye see when she couldn't get Shamus McCarthy, not if she put her eyes on two sticks, she made up her mind to content herself with being his mother-in-law, instead of his wife."

"Well, she's aisily satisfied!"

"And see, Johanna, faix she owes ye a bad turn—and so do I—and now, bedad, ye've *got* it."

"What do ye mane, woman alive. Talk plain," said the girl, breathing hard, and setting down her basket.

"Oh, I'll make it very plain, my honey. Ye broke

into two of me good matches, and destroyed me; first and foremost there was Tim and yerself—a rare creditable business—and bringing in money and good luck. But, sure, ye wouldn't hear of him, and many a girl just aching to get the likes of him, but you run me out of the house! That was bad enough, but didn't ye go and put the comether on Shamus McCarthy, and set him against the grand marriage I had drawn down with Maggie, and nigh killed the woman with spite and jealousy? Now he is gone off, to the world's end, and his marriage will not bring me in, what you'd scrape off an old skillett."

Here Ninnie paused exhausted from want of breath, but as Johanna remained dumb, she presently resumed with increased volubility—

"Haven't I told ye times over, that young girls has no call to marry young men. Oh, it is not reasonable; it's just money on one side, and looks on the other. When yer up in the forties ye may get hold of a young man. But since you and Shamus spoiled two splendid matches on me, I just did what I could with the pieces. Maggie and yer father is to be married Sunday week."

Johanna saw it all. This was Maggie's revenge. Could anything be more complete? By one bold

move, she became not only her stepmother, but her mistress. John had savings in the Munster Bank, and a snug little house at the end of the lane; and Johanna's treasures, her woven linen, her garden, her cows and poultry in which she took such pride, would now belong to her rival. It would all be Maggie's, it would be Maggie's house. Well, thank God, whatever came or went, *she* had Shamus.

Ninnie was keenly disappointed to find that the girl made no attempt to combat the position, and no scene. She simply stooped and picked up her basket, and without even bidding the time of day, passed out, with head erect, into the pouring rain.

At the Cross she stopped to ask for a letter, and to whisper the news to Mary, whom the intelligence struck speechless, and then proceeded home. Here she discovered her father, crouching over the fire, smoking, and doing sums on a piece of an envelope. It was not often that John Daly sat idle in the house. When Johanna had removed her dripping cloak, and hung it up, she came over, and said—

"I'm afther meeting Ninnie Quain and hearing a piece of news. She giv' out as you are going to be married to Maggie Leary."

"'Tis true," he acknowledged, in a tone of stifled

defiance, crumpling the paper in his hand. "Have ye anything to say agin it?"

"No, dada, if you are pleased; only I'd sooner ye had stopped as ye are. 'Twas a sudden notion ye took, I'm thinking."

"It wasn't I took the notion, but Maggie," he admitted, "and seeing she has a fine fortin, it wasn't for me to go agin her. She fancies the air up in these parts, instead of the town, and so she's comin'. It won't make no difference to you, Johanna, ye will still have the cows and the garden to mind. Maggie is no worker. Yes," to the pup who came and laid his head on his knee, and stared at him, "I'm puzzling to think *what* Maggie Leary sees in an old chap over fifty."

Johanna could have told him, but she maintained a prudent silence.

"I declare," he resumed, "when Ninnie came up here three days ago, with an account, ye might have knocked me down with anything at all. Maggie is bringing a china tay set, a chest of drawers, a table and chairs, and a fine jennet with the cart and tackling."

"And something else as well," supplemented his daughter.

"No, not as I know of—unless——"

"She's bringing the worst tongue in all Kerry."

"Come, now, hould yer prate, and whatever yer do, don't be barging, and fighting wid her. She won't harm ye. There's room enough for two women here at present. Tho' 'tis time yer wer' in a house of yer own, Johanna. Ye had a right to be away by this time."

"Ye never said that afore, dada," she rejoined. "'Twas Maggie put *that* in yer head. She, a black stranger, as niver set foot in the boreen, would throw me out of me own house. Oh, there's a woman for yer!"

"Well, anyhow, she has money, and I'm getting good sum down, so I have no call to be so eager after eggs from this out."

"And ye are to be married Sunday week?"

"Yes, quietly, ye know, no show off. But we are going to Cork for a few days. It will spoil a week on me, but she stood out for it. Ye will have all redd up, and the new things in, agin we come back."

"Very well, I'll do me best," agreed Johanna. "There's the butter money I got from the Cross," holding out some silver and a half-sovereign.

"Keep it, ye can get yerself a new gown, so as not to be behind Maggie all out, and wear it at the wedding."

"I think I'll find a use for the money, besides a new dress, dada. I'm not going to put a foot in the chapel."

"Why so, ye black-faced scrawn?"

"It would look so awkward like, for yer, to be seen with a great big grenadier of a grown-up daughter, standing beside ye."

"Well, faix, maybe yer in the right, Johanna," he said, pinching his chin reflectively. "Yer a sight too like me first wife, yer own mother—and I'd feel, maybe, as if she was standing alongside of me, jeering at Maggie, and scorning me for putting her in her shoes. Oh, but *she* was the great beauty! They say that in the old times her people were kings beyant the Shannon. Well, well, well, 'tis all the will of God"—a frequent phrase in Daly's mouth—and with this pious declaration, he got up and left the kitchen.

CHAPTER VIII

THE wedding of Daly and Maggie Leary had ceased to be a nine days' wonder, and Maggie had duly returned from her honeymoon in all her bridal finery—white feathers, white veil, white gloves and a green costume. She arrived at her new home on a real jaunting car, a vehicle which had not been seen in the breen within the memory of living man, and created an immense sensation among the cows and goats. Everything was in readiness for the happy pair, the house in order and clean as a new pin; a pair of boiled fowls and a piece of bacon awaited the traveller—as well as Johanna, in her Sunday gown.

“Faix, it wasn't at all a bad little place,” said Maggie to herself, as her roving and suspicious eye took in the neat garden, the sleek cows, and the flock of friendly geese and poultry. Johanna had an uncommonly snug home, and she—oh happy reflection!—had turned her out of it! Nevertheless,

like Ninnie, she felt aggrieved and disappointed by the girl's attitude of calm acquiescence—it discounted half the enjoyment of her revenge.

Johanna was silent, quiet, and industrious. *Was* she stupid? Was she a stone? Some people had been heard to say that her isolated life—the hard tyranny of her father, and the total want of education—had left Johanna Daly next door to a fool. A handsome fool, who worked hard, held her tongue, and accepted her fate with the stoicism of an oyster.

Mrs. Daly lost no time in publicly announcing the fact, that she was “very delicate and wake in herself,” and on the strength of this excuse, invariably lay in bed for breakfast, and made no effort to share the housework. She read quantities of penny novelettes, sucked peppermints, issued commands, and frequently jaunted off to the town on the jennet's car—returning home at a late hour, with a supply of gossip and cheap whisky, a highly flushed face, and a pair of watery eyes.

Moreover Maggie was mean, cunning and cruel; she used every weapon which fate had placed in her hand, in order to pierce the heart of her unhappy companion. For instance, Johanna's livestock—thanks to her solicitude—were her personal

friends. She was well acquainted with the character and foibles of each calf and gosling. Among the poultry her favourite was a pretty little black-and-white hen, who had raised numerous clutches most conscientiously, and for deportment and self-denial was a pattern to many human mothers. She kept herself and her family aloof—generally in some warm corner under the hedge—where she cared for her chickens and conducted their education ; never taking part in the furious battles in the yard, but ever decent, reserved, and respected. She was as tame as a pet bird, and knew her mistress well. When she opened the half-door of a morning she generally found the speckled hen awaiting her with her head on one side, her bright black eyes offering a mute greeting. Johanna was partial to this faithful, praiseworthy little creature, and often gave her a special dole of crumbs, or the leavings of the pup's stirabout. These attentions had been noticed by Maggie, and one afternoon the speckled hen was missing. The hedge, garden, and farm were searched in vain ; she was not to be found in any of her old haunts. If she was laying out, as John Daly suggested, it was the first time in her well-regulated existence she had been guilty of the enormity.

Two days later Johanna, coming in from the town, found Maggie and Ninnie Quain dining merrily on broth and cabbage. After her long trudge she was extremely hungry, and glad of a plateful of warm broth, which she ate with a hunch of bread. All the time she was eating the two women watched her closely, winked at one another, and occasionally laughed aloud.

"What ails ye?" inquired Johanna suddenly.

"'Tis only a grand joke we are playing on yez," rejoined Maggie, wiping her eyes as she spoke. "'Tis the speckled hen yer after atin'; she was so mortal tough I had to make her into broth to get any good of her."

Johanna opened her mouth to speak, but could not articulate a syllable; her face grew red and white by turns.

"She let me catch her as friendly as anything," resumed Mrs. Daly in a tone of easy narrative, "an' I cut off her head in the turf-house. How did ye like the broth——?"

Johanna's reply was vehement. She rose up with the bowl in her hand and flung it and its contents into the fire, and dashed out of the kitchen. The poor girl ran away up the glen to a special hiding-

place, and there cried her heart out for the little speckled hen.

Maggie deemed the effect of her joke so eminently successful, that the black heifer was led away and sold. But the worst jest of all—the pigs, who had betimes departed down the boreen in happy ignorance of their doom, and caused no mental agony when they thus made their exit, were now, alas! home-killed and cured. Maggie's second cousin Hennessey, the pig-jobber, came out one morning, and the slaughter of the innocents was a bloody tragedy, perpetrated with angry oaths and ear-rending squeals. On that occasion Johanna again took refuge in the mountain, this time with her fingers in her ears.

Many and many a day she fled from the kitchen to escape a fire—in other words, a tongue—and Maggie more than once complained to old John that “the girl never shut the door after her before she went out.”

The ensuing winter was a hard one in every way, and it pressed sorely on Johanna. The severe weather curtailed Mrs. Daly's excursions, and she was compelled to fall back on the very moderate resources of her home, and the excitement of bullying and baiting her unhappy stepdaughter. The

poor girl's spirits were benumbed with cold and misery, the only thing that kept her heart up was a rare visit to Mary at the Cross. One letter from Shamus was what she lived upon throughout that bitter season. This letter related that Shamus was out in the Indies, a full corporal, and doing well. He was attending school, and getting to be pretty good at figures now—as no fellow could get on without schooling. He was also working up his shooting, and had won a prize of fifty rupees. So he was busy, but never too busy to remember Johanna—he was saving up his money, and was going to send home for her, same as Sergeant Conner sent money to bring out his girl, and he would make a lady of her yet.

Enclosed was a photograph, and Johanna could not realise for some seconds, that the smart young man in uniform—and with close-cropped curls and a moustache—was Shamus; but it was, sure enough. Her own Shamus, so altered, that he seemed almost to be a stranger. The letter concluded in small-handwriting, squeezed into the corner of the sheet.

“I think very long of the time I'm not seeing you, ashore. I wish I'd a picture of you, Shevauneen,

forby the one that s printed on my heart ; this goes to you from your faithful

“SHAMUS J. MCCARTHY.

“Corporal, A Company. 1st Battalion of the Donnybrook Fusiliers, Trimulgherry, Secunderabad.”

This treasure and its enclosure, were lying ten days at the Cross before Johanna received them, and when she and her friend had talked them over in the little back room, Mary said,

“If I were you, Johanna, I'd get out of the house above, and lave the place to herself. Sure, ye are doing the work of two servants, and no wages at all, no mistress could be worse than Maggie. Why don't ye go into service?”

“Augh, I'd be loath to lave me father alone wid her.”

“Do ye say so?”

“And who would cook for him, and wash, and keep the place at all? I must just bear it—till Shamus sends for me.”

“That won't be for a good bit yet,” rejoined the other. “And if she gets wind of yer letters, there will be fine ructions. She has her suspicions, and last time she was by here, she come in—laws me! but she brought the smell of spirrits wid her—bad

stuff, too, but what can ye expect for threepence a glass?"

"What did she want wid you, mavourneen?"

"To ax if I knew who was the girl as was go-between with Johanna and Shamus? Well, see here, I'm the worst liar in the wide world! When I tell a lie, I turn scarlet, but I told a good one when I was about it then; tho' me face was like a bonfire. She didn't believe me, a happorth, and she just shook her fist over the counter, and said, 'Ye know the girl, I see, and just tell her, that if I catch her meddling with my stepdaughter, I'll ate her down to the tail,' and with that, she walked out. Mind ye keep dark about this letter. If she sees it, she'll just tear me eyes out."

"Sure, there's no fear of her seeing it!" replied Johanna stoutly, "and when I can steal away, I'll come down and get ye to write an answer for me, ashore, some day when she's off at the town. And now I must be going."

Although the girl was dumb respecting her letter, yet joy, as well as murder, will out, and Mrs. Daly with the sure instinct of jealousy, was apt enough to read a hidden rapture in Johanna's deep grey eyes.

She guessed the truth. The girl had been to the

Cross—she had found a letter from Shamus. The conviction grew and grew. She watched her victim as she went about her work ; brooding over her, and her enviable prospects with all the dull devilry of a heavy yet cunning nature. She must get hold of that letter, but how?—how?—how? That same evening she pretended to be sick—with an awful pain in her chest—and retired to bed in the “room” off the kitchen as soon as she had disposed of a fairly substantial tea. But when all the house was sound asleep, the pup, who dozed before the kitchen fire, was surprised to behold Mrs. Daly cross the kitchen, in stockinged feet, and, carrying a candle, climb (for the first time) to Johanna’s loft. She crept in stealthily, with the light shaded by her hand. Yes, there lay the girl, fast asleep, and with such a happy smile on her lips. The hand which lay outside the bedclothes held—what?—no less than a photograph of Shamus, in soldier’s uniform. She tried to remove it, but Johanna moved in her sleep, and hardy as she was, Maggie dared not wake her. On the dressing-table lay an open letter—spread out wide, as if stupid Johanna had been endeavouring to decipher it. Well, if Johanna could not read, other people were better educated. Mrs. Daly devoured it

standing, read it through twice. And so he was getting on, and going to send for Shevauneen—so that was the plan! No, no, not as long as she was to the fore, and she turned and looked at the sleeping girl, with a glare of hungry malice.

Presently she again took up the letter, and stole like a thieving cat down into the kitchen, where she tore the epistle with fierce, strong hands, and burned it piece by piece in the candle.

The mystery of the vanished letter puzzled Johanna for many days. She placed the blame on herself, who had lost it, but how?—on the mice who had eaten it—on the wind who had stolen it!—but she never even thought of her stepmother,—she was a dull and stupid girl—simply because in all the months Maggie had been under the roof, she had not once attempted to visit her room up in the rafters.

Maggie went off early to town in a black temper, which luckily merely confined itself to sniffs, looks, and orders. She returned home rather late—in fact, it was pitch dark when she appeared, and John had already retired. After a hasty meal, which included a glass of cheap raw whisky, Maggie suddenly broke out—let loose an overwhelming cataract of passion. Carried headlong on the stream of jealousy and

whisky, she raved like a madwoman. She stripped her very soul before her rival, who stood listening to these outpourings with a terrible, tragic calm.

"*She* should never marry Shamus," screamed Mrs. Daly; "indeed, many's the laugh he and herself had over her! That was the way with a bostogue like that! Of course, *she* could have married Shamus if she'd held up her finger—but he was too wild; and a settled man was more to her liking. It had come to her knowledge that Shamus was carrying on with Johanna—just like the mean, underhand, doublefaced spalpeen that he was—but it would all come to nothing. "And that ye may tell him from me, the *next* time yer writing, Johanna—tell him that with *my* compliments," and, as she spoke, she struggled to her feet, flung herself into the room, and banged the door.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER the discovery in Johanna's loft, Mrs. Daly became unbearable. All the housework fell upon her unhappy stepdaughter; milking, cooking, the rearing of calves, the management of the tiny farm, and besides this, she had an imperious overseer, who required to be waited on perpetually. She was not a servant, but a slave, and was rarely suffered to attend Mass, or to visit the Cross. "Johnny promised me a servant," reflected her tormentor, "and I'll not spare her." He, with the rage of money in his veins, and the desire for peace, never interfered, being sincerely afraid of Maggie. After so many years of a quiet peaceful life, he had become a mere timid cipher in his own house. He was an arrant coward, and remained away as much as possible, sometimes, under the pretence of the exigencies of business, for two or three days.

Daly's chief comfort lay in the reflection that if Maggie died first, by agreement all her money

became his. Hourly he wished that she was dead, as he tramped in quest of eggs; but her terrible turns of "wakeness" meant, alas! nothing at all, and she was twenty years younger than himself; when he contemplated these solemn facts, his sighs were heart-rending and profound.

Ninnie Quain frequently came to visit her kind friend and patroness, Maggie Daly—indeed, Maggie had many acquaintances who drove out to see her, and spend a day in talk, and discussing "lashins" of spirits and victuals, but Ninnie was one of the "regulars" according to her entertainer, and brought a budget of news and flattery, whenever she entered the kitchen. She smoked and drank, and often made that same decent kitchen ring with horrible stories, and maudlin laughter, whilst Shevauneen—and even the pup—sat aghast at such unaccustomed company. Poor Shevauneen, the chapel and the Cross were her only sanctuaries from the wretch who had descended on her home, like some malignant spirit!

Moreover Ninnie's visits were neither gratuitous nor fruitless. She was combining business with pleasure, and arranging (with the full consent of her parents)

a marriage between Johanna Daly and Timothy of the slated house—indeed, Timothy had now offered twenty pounds for the beauty of the Glen, and John was thinking it over. Certain sure he would lose a good, hard-working, honest girl; but once gone, Maggie would be more peaceable, and Maggie was mad for the match—also twenty pounds was no blind nut, and who ever heard of a Kerry man getting twenty sovereigns *for* his daughter? Twenty gold sovereigns was twenty gold sovereigns. “No, no, no,” to a hateful whisper—he was not selling his own flesh and blood, it was natural he should get a small recompense for her services. Johanna was a wonder to manage a place—and who would mind the pigs, and poultry, when she was married?

Maggie, blindly set upon revenge—and the delight of marrying the rival for whom Shamus had slighted her to a bleary-eyed old man—entirely overlooked the fact that when Johanna was disposed of, she would have to rise and work, and cook, and milk. The bargain was eventually arranged with the full consent of father, stepmother, and proposed husband. Stupid Shevauneen was the last to hear of the arrangement. Coming in late one summer evening,

from feeding a calf, she discovered a jovial party drawn up at a table, on which stood a lamp, tumblers, a black bottle, and—unaccustomed luxury—a baker's currant cake.

There was John, Maggie, Ninnie, and Timothy, in the most uproarious spirits; their faces were flushed, they were all talking together, and thumping on the table.

"See here, it's like this," screamed Ninnie, in a tone of authority, "and the job I like best. The girl has money, and she and the boy takes over the farm, and works it, whilst the old people get the girl's fortin to live on fer life, and turn out. There's a lot of bother and nasty work, marrying old cratures to young girls and boys—and a lot of holding back, and trouble. It's ten times aisier to deal with two young ones." Suddenly she was aware that Johanna was in their company, but Ninnie, with the audacity of her calling, turned round, and boldly surveying her where she stood inside the door, said, "Well, girl, here's yer husband for ye!"

"Me what?" repeated Johanna.

"Sure, 'tis meself," announced Timothy, rising with an effort. He was a little, bent man of sixty, and

very rheumatic. "And I'm proud to be gettin' the handsomest girl in Kerry"; here he hobbled over to her, but she stood erect, and waved him back. "Come, now, me darlin', ye will look well in a real sealskin coat, and a hat and feathers, and ridin' on yer own side-car. And yer father will drop in and see ye every market day, and take his glass and dinner. Come, now, it's a bargain!" and he held out his skinny hands.

Johanna stared at him steadily, then deliberately set down the bucket, and without one word fled up the ladder to her lair, and barred the door. She might bar the door, but she could not shut out sounds, and the shouts of carousing and merriment which lasted long into the night—whilst Johanna lay on her bed with the patchwork quilt drawn over her head, trembling like some hunted creature, and asking herself, *What* was she to do?

Maggie, the next day, promptly answered the question. "She was to 'cotton' to old Tim—accept the splendid match as was made for her, and giv' out too."

To deny or repudiate a marriage made up by parents, is a step never taken in Kerry. Such con-

duct would be considered unnatural and disgraceful, and would stamp a girl for life. Disgrace or not, Johanna would rather perish than go back on her word to Shamus. As for Timothy—he was a beast. She would never stand before the priest with him. She begged her father for two months' delay to think it over. Surely, she said to herself, a couple of months would do great things—Shamus might return, something might happen, someone might die—maybe herself.

CHAPTER X

AS it happened to be August, and the busiest time of the whole year, Johanna, thanks to her father's remonstrances, was accorded one month's reprieve. After that date—the second week in September—her fate was sealed. Timothy was impatient to claim her, Maggie was importunate to be rid of her, and Fate was inexorable. During the week that followed her engagement, Johanna was closely watched. She represented a prize (value at least twenty pounds), as well as the consummation of an absolute revenge: and for days her stepmother never suffered the haggard, hollow-eyed bride-elect out of her sight. But gradually her care relaxed, the Harp Hotel held out its irresistible charm, and one afternoon Maggie jogged away to the town, ostensibly to buy the trousseau. Here was her captive's opportunity! She sped breathlessly down the boreen, and told her woes to Mary; when she concluded, she added with a sob, "Our loch is too small, and all a mask of flowers, so I'll have to

walk over the hills to Loch Dhu—the Black Loch—and may the Blessed Virgin forgive me for what I'm going to do—but she knows as well as I do, I was druv to it."

"Balderdash, wid yer lochs!" cried Mary, who was a practical and energetic person, with a wider experience than her friend. (She had been to Cork, and once on a five-shilling excursion to Dublin, where her aunt by marriage kept a thriving lodging-house.) Her denunciations of John, Maggie, and Timothy, afforded an unspeakable relief to Shevau-neen, who had not been endowed with the gift of expression—no, not even in the soft Irish tongue. Mary's ready intelligence promptly mapped out a plan for her friend. First of all she sat down, and with a scratchy nib and faintly watered ink, wrote off the tale to Shamus, as dictated by his sweetheart, who stood over her watching the flying pen with tearful, wistful eyes. Here is the letter that was ultimately despatched:—

"DEAR SHAMUS,—This leaves me in good health, as I hope it finds you. But I'm terribly unhappy, and me heart is broken in two halves. Ye know me father is married to Maggie Leary, and she brought in as a stepmother over me a twelvemonth

gone, and I've not known an hour's peace since. She never stirs, but to give work: and I have to wait on her hand and foot, besides minding the place. And she has a tongue that's like a red-hot poker, and a black, wicked mind. Me father is in terror of her, and God knows, so am I. She has made him agree to give me to Timothy—the slater—in three weeks' time. I got that much law—but marry him I never will. Sooner nor that, ye may look for me in the water. Oh, Shamus McCarthy, I have no language, bad or good, and I cannot explain to you how wretched I feel, and if it wasn't for the thought of you, I'd die—and sometimes I'm afeard that you have forgotten me. I've not heard a word of you for months. Sometimes I think that, living away in such a lonely place, that the Blessed Virgin has overlooked me! Could that be so? Anyhow, Mary here, who is writing this letter, says not, and she has an aunt in Dublin—a woman from Killorglen—who will take me in, and get me a small place. So I'm going off next week, and not a soul will know where I am—but Mary and yourself. She will write the name down here for you, and it's in Dublin I'll be waiting for you till death—and 'tis here old Timothy can wait for me till death, and I am your faithful friend,

“SHEVAUNEEN DALY.”

This letter being concluded, sealed, and stamped, she carried it off to post with her own hands. It was a five miles' walk to the town, and it was more than possible she might come across Maggie; however, her mind was firmly fixed, she was prepared to take all risks, even the risk of this desperate encounter. Before she parted with her precious epistle, Johanna kissed it solemnly, and made a sign of the cross upon it, ere it dropped from her hand into that mysterious receptacle, the letter-box.

Meanwhile Maggie was carousing in the back parlour of a public, and her daring prisoner walked through the street unclaimed. She met many women she knew, who all expostulated and gesticulated at her retirement—and some at her approaching marriage. To these, she merely listened, nodded, and walked on, but to two or three of her schoolfellows she vouchsafed to explain the situation.

"Sure, I never get the chance of stirring a toe out of the boreen, since I got a stepmother. She has the jennet bet up, and working from morning till night. Thank God, to-day I got shot of her, and I'm taking a vacation."

"And where's Timothy, alannah?" asked one, with a giggle.

"How do I know? I've no hand or part in Timothy, whatever they may tell yer."

"And ye won't marry him!" screamed a girl. "Him as rich as a Jew man—and getting a carpet for his parlour!"

"He may put a carpet on the fair green, if he plases, but I'll never marry anyone like him, whatever comes or goes—I'd far sooner die."

"But yer father and stepmother?"

"I'm me own father and mother this good while back."

"Whatever made John marry Maggie for?" asked a grinning, freckled girl.

"Ye mustn't ax me."

"Lots of men marry—most times just to displace their families. And so now ye won't marry to place him!"

"Ye've said it," and with a general nod, Johanna hitched her cloak on her shoulders, and walked on.

Mrs. Daly was generally late out of the town, and when she arrived home it was her stepdaughter's business to put up the jennet and car. But nine

o'clock struck, and there was no sound or sign of the jennet's tackling, jingling up the path.

Old John became greatly excited, and instead of as usual retiring into his box bed, he remained up, wide awake, eager, and alert.

"What the mischief is keeping her!" he repeated at least ten times, "and the car? If she had fallen off it, and broke her neck or anything, the jennet would come on home. Faix, something has happened! Well, well, well! 'tis all the will of God."

All that night—which was full moon—this wicked old husband's hopes ran high. He and the pup went half-way down the lane, and twice returned with the joyful intelligence "that there was no sign of any mortal thing." Towards dawn, he sat down in his chair, and dozed, but Johanna remained on watch, and at six o'clock in the morning was rewarded by beholding Mrs. Daly herself, belabouring a truly exhausted animal up to the door.

"And whatever was it kep' you the whole blessed night out?" demanded John, struggling between sleep, bitter disappointment, and rage.

"If ye will give me lave to sit down in me own house, I'll tell ye," rejoined Maggie, walking stiffly into the kitchen, and sinking into a chair.

"What kep' ye?" reiterated John. "What kep' ye, woman?"

"The fairies," was the unexpected apology. "And to that there's no denying. I've heard tell of them before, but I never come acrost them till last night."

John and Johanna, both true believers in "the good people," listened to the explanation with grave faces.

"Johanna, girl, undo the tackling," commanded her stepmother, as she untied a shapeless bonnet, "the jennet hasn't a leg under him. Faix, I believe we were as far as Cork last night. And then, get me a cup of tay, for I'm destroyed wid the headache." As subsequently Maggie sipped her tea, she related the following remarkable experience, with many pauses, and emphatic gestures.

"Sure, and didn't I lave the town about nine o'clock—it being such a fine moon, and I'd a power of business—and Mrs. MacNally wouldn't be said, or led, till I stopped to tay. Well, I had me tay well and good, and was about two miles of the way home, coming along fair and aisy, when all at once we got off the road—and, bedad, try as I would, I never got on it again! Think of that for an expayriance! When I come to a house, I bawled to a man, and he come and set the

jennet on the right track, but, by me oath, in about ten minutes' time, we were wandering round, and in a part of the country unbeknown to me entirely. I spent the whole night, more or less, in knocking up folks, and getting directions, and bein' set on the way home—but it was all of no manner of use whatever. I just lost me road, as fast as I found it, so then I began to see the fairies was at me, and there was no use in striving wid them, so I lay down in the cart, and waited awhile, and when I woke up wasn't the sun shining, and me half-way up the boreen?—but if ye don't believe me, ye have only to look at the jennet, an' you'll see as he has travelled far, and fast, this blessed night."

Unquestionably the unhappy animal had been many miles, and was completely worn out. He did not recover his perambulations with the fairies for days, and Mrs. Daly's experiences were loudly discussed and related in every house, shop, and shebeen, within ten miles. Most people were inclined to think that her mysterious adventure was due to the ill-will of the two old blackthorn bushes half-way up the glen—who couldn't abide a stranger.

CHAPTER XI

A COOL September dawn was glimmering through the little window, and discovered Shevauneen in the loft, dressed for her first journey. She had a good-sized bundle in her hand, and her shoes; over her arm she carried a cape cloak, and wore her best stuff gown. As the girl stood, and looked her last, she sighed deeply—sighed to leave this low garret under the thatch, with its humble stump bed, rush chairs, and penny glass—sighed, as her eyes lingered wistfully on the long chain of black marks on the whitewashed wall—they represented the hopes and fears of four hundred and ninety days. Then she stole softly down the ladder, and opened the kitchen door. The dew was heavy on the grass, the animals were not yet stirring. Johanna went to the byre and fondled the two little cows—who were visibly amazed at her early visit. Her tears fell fast on the sleek black coat of a heifer of her own rearing called “Donnie,” and Donnie licked her gown. She bade farewell to the old ass, to the little white pigs, who

grunted interrogations; then, accompanied by the pup, she turned her back for ever on the cabin, and set her face towards the mountains. Johanna was about to walk to Moher, and there to take the train for Dublin. She had the price of her ticket, and a pound note in her pocket, as well as the address of Mary's aunt—this latter written very plainly upon a quarter of a sheet of paper, which she was to show to a cabman at the King's Bridge station; he would drive her to her destination, and once there, she would be safe. Mary's aunt would take her in hand and get her a comfortable, quiet place—and as Mary very truly remarked, "she had better be earning good wages, than wearing the flesh off her bones, for the likes of Maggie."

The morning was perfect—the heather on the hills shaded away to a deep, gentian blue—the tops of the mountains were veiled in mist—as the girl walked on among the blackberry brambles, and the splendid scarlet ash berries, till she came to a knoll, where she halted to look back once more upon her home, and—as she gazed—she wept.

However, that was not the way to reach Moher, urged her conscience. She must hurry on. She had a good twelve miles before her, and luckily knew every step of the track.

After half an hour's steady walking, on coming suddenly round the corner of a great grey boulder, Shevauneen was startled to discover a young man of her acquaintance, sitting on a stone, evidently awaiting her. It was Dan Cairns—Mary's boy—who had given up his day's work in order to see Mary's friend safely across the mountains and into Moher station, as she had very little English, and when she was nervous, every word ran out of her head.

"Oh, Danny," she cried, "and what are ye here for?"

"Sure, then, I'm here just waiting on *you*," he answered, rising, "to put you on the first bit of your road. Bedad, 'tis a stiff walk."

"'Tis too good ye are entirely."

"Not at all, me girl, why wouldn't I?—and isn't Shamus and me great friends?"

At this announcement she blushed vividly, and murmured, "God send he may do as much for you."

"Bedad, I hope *my* girl will never be swept out of her home by a she-devil like Maggie Leary! She thinks to best you and Shamus, but she won't. And so Shamus has gone for a sojer in one of the Irish regiments?"

"Yes, but he didn't want to let on."

"Ah, what humbugging he'd be up to! And didn't

John Foley, who's in the army, write home and say he went out in the wan ship wid Shamus McCarthy—and that his dancing and singing bet all, and was the diversion of the whole company, and the officers and ladies, and that 'twas an elegant, smart chap he looked in his uniform?"

"I suppose so."

"Faix, Shamus did a good job, when he took the shilling—he'll get his fill of fighting for nothing—he's *paid* to do, what comes handy to him. Bedad, I never saw a better boy to clear a fair. I'll never forget the last shindy in town. Such fightin', and crackin', and leatherin' and belting never was known, and him in the heart of it!"

"Arrah, nonsense, Danny," protested his companion; "to hear you prate, one would think he was always fighting—he was a splendid fowler, and the Captain thought a deal of him."

"Fightin' and courtin'—and singin' and dancin'—that's about the size of him, though he was not too backward in the book when we were going to school. And now," continued Danny, drawing a large parcel out of his pocket, "here's a cake me mother made ye, as she said maybe ye'd have no breakfast—and we might as well sit down and rest ourselves a bit."

The two then seated themselves on a moss-clothed stone and breakfasted on the good brown wheaten cake, drank water from a mountain stream, and presently resumed their journey, walking side by side at a brisk pace, for the most part in utter silence. At last the little station of Moher came into view, and Dan, who was evidently a practised traveller, took Johanna's ticket, and cautioned her not to lose it for her life.

"Here, Tim," he called to a porter, "do ye see the girl in the blue cloak there yonder? She hardly knows the English, and she's going to Dublin alone. I want ye to keep yer eye on her!"

"Begob," responded Tim, "it will be hard for me to keep me eye *off* her. She a splendid fine girl; an' who is she at all?"

"Shevauneen Daly, from our parts," responded Dan with obvious complacency.

"Ah, I've heard tell of her, frequent. By good luck I'm going to Mallow on this train, and I'll put her meself in the right carriage for Dublin; and here she comes," alluding to the Tralee mail.

Shevauneen, who in all her life had never seen a steam-engine, grew deathly pale as she beheld the snorting red and green monster. But there was no

time for trepidation or hesitation; she was soon hurried into a carriage, whilst Dan secured the pup, by slipping a handkerchief inside his collar.

Then Dan took leave of Johanna—with a kiss for his trouble—and presently his smiling face, the staring pup, the little station, and the familiar hillsides, had been left far behind.

The girl viewed the novel scenery with eager, admiring eyes; the different halting places were all so many wonders to her. At last they thundered over the bridge into Mallow, and here she alighted in reply to the shout "Change here for Dublin." Only for Tim, the friendly porter, Shevauneen would have lost both her head and the train, but he knew all about everything, and talked and expounded and bustled about, as completely at home as if Mallow Junction were his father's own house. There was some time to wait, and he gallantly escorted the beautiful Johanna up and down the platform—proud of his companion—who, unlike him, was totally unconscious of admiring glances, and whispered raptures, among other passengers of the tourist class.

"Now, there's the real, true type of Irish beauty!" exclaimed an artist. "I'd give fifty pounds to paint her as Erin."

"But quite a poor, common girl," objected a woman, "and much too tall."

"She's like a queen!"

"Queen of Spades! and she is frightened—look at her eyes—glancing about like some newly trapped creature."

"And what eyes they are!" said the artist, "the very home of love—and tragedy."

"Do love and tragedy live together?" sneered the lady.

"Yes, generally."

In the meantime, the gallant porter had presented his fair companion with a bottle of mixed sweets, and a picture paper, and finally secured her a seat in a crowded compartment of a crowded train, wrung her hand warmly, invited her to write to him, and be *sure* and let him know when she was passing through. So far so good, thought Johanna, with a sigh of deep satisfaction. Only for the crowd, she would be all right. But station after station claimed some of them, and by the time they stopped at Portarlinton, a thin, little, foxy-faced woman, and two fat children, were her sole companions. These children had never ceased to gaze with greedy eyes upon the picture paper, and the bottle of neglected

sweets. At last Johanna comprehended—she was naturally dull, but the human eye is eloquent, and easily read. She gladly lent the paper, and shared the sweets with the children, and presently their mother entered into conversation. She affably explained how she had been down to Cork for about a fortnight, and was on her way home to Dublin. And—nodding at Johanna—"I suppose you are going there too?"

Johanna followed her speech with some difficulty—it was different to the slow, melodious English of Kerry—short, quick, and snappy.

"Yes, to Dublin," she answered at last.

"Your first visit?"

"Oh, yes; I am not very great at the English," she stammered out, and then was led on by degrees to explain that she was leaving home on account of a stepmother—no word of her marriage—and was looking for a nice quiet place in service.

"As a general servant?" asked the woman; "and what can you do?"

"I can bake good soda bread, and I can milk, and make butter and wash, and rear calves, and dig a bit, and weed turnips, and cut turf, and thatch."

"That's no manner of use in Dublin, me girl!"

cried the other with a scornful laugh. "I suppose you can't cook a dinner, or wait?"

"Oh"—misunderstanding—"I can wait, ma'am. God knows I'm good at the waiting."

The other stared vacantly, and the girl resumed.

"I'm not clever—but I'm awfully eager to learn—and I'm going to a friend as will assist me."

"Oh, indeed, are you?" cried her listener with a sniff. This announcement was a sharp disappointment, as the foxy-faced woman was looking for a servant—her chronic condition, since she kept a lodging-house, and gave little wages, little food and plenty of hard work. This seemed the very girl for her—a strong, quiet, humble, ignorant young creature, from the wilds of Kerry. She could scrub and clean, wash, and carry coals; eat potatoes and salt, have no grand ideas, and would be thankful for small wages. This fellow traveller seemed to be a providential windfall, and to hear that she was already bespoken, caused the poor woman a pang of jealousy.

"And where are ye going, might I ask?"

"I can't rightly tell you, ma'am," replied Johanna. "I'm no scholar, but I've got it in here, in writing," and from a little bag round her neck, she drew out a small scrap of paper, on which was inscribed her destination. This most precious paper she carefully

unfolded, and handed across to her companion. The little woman took it carelessly, and was about to read it, when (both windows being open) a fierce gust of wind from the bog, tore it from her fingers and carried it away! Yes, there it went, Johanna's most valuable possession, fluttering afar over the heather and furze, like some happily-released white bird!

"Oh, God! what shall I do?" cried Johanna in Irish, rushing to the window and leaning far out. But it was of no avail, looking and praying, the all-important paper was gone!

"Well, to think of the likes of that!" exclaimed the woman; "the wind just snapped it out of me hand—well, I'm sorry."

"Sorry!" repeated Johanna, "well ye may be—it's just me home and me friends that have gone through that window, and are flying about on the bog. What am I to do?"

"Don't ye know of any other people in all Dublin?" Shevauneen shook her head—her sobs were choking her.

"Have ye no friends then at all?"

"Not wan as I ever set eyes on. Oh, I'm ruined," wringing her hands in a frenzy of despair, "unless I get out at the next station, and go back and look for the paper."

"Balderskin!" cried the other, "is it to go search the bog of Allen for a bit of paper the size of half your hand? Yer mad to think of it, and I'll tell ye what ye'll do. Come home wid me—I want a girl of your sort just now—and ye can turn about and write to yer friends, or I'll write for ye, and get the bit of an address again. Sure, there's no harm done, at all, at all."

"Oh, then, God bless ye, ma'am, for a good woman," cried the girl hysterically.

It was the first time Mrs. Flynn had ever heard herself addressed as a good woman, and she looked not a little startled.

"I'll be thankful to work for ye, and for nothing" (oh, rash vow), "if ye will just write a bit of a note for me."

Mrs. Flynn nodded her head encouragingly, and Johanna drew back in her corner, stifling her long-drawn sobs, and gazing at the cruel bog with beautiful, reproachful eyes, little suspecting that she had but freed her head from one yoke, to place it under another.

Not long after this they arrived at their journey's end, Kingsbridge Station, which, to Johanna's unaccustomed eyes, presented a noble appearance, as well as a scene of the wildest, maddest confusion—

running porters, shouting car drivers, eager friends. Mrs. Flynn's tone now assumed a much sharper key, as she ordered the girl out, and to look after the children, whilst she got the luggage and a cab. In ten minutes' time, partly consumed by bargaining, Shevauneen of the Glen was being jolted away in a rickety old growler laden with two tin boxes and a hamper, and rattled over the stones into Dublin city. She felt like some sort of strange, wild creature, as she gazed out on the trams, and shops, and cars, the gay streets, the crowds of people—it was all such a different world to what she had known since the hour she was born. This was the world the priest spoke about—the world that held Shamus. Oh, it was all too grand, and too quick-working, and too strange, for an ignorant creature like her. Her reflections were disturbed by the cab coming to a full stop, in front of a tall, dingy house in a row, and by the woman telling her peremptorily to get out of the cab first, go up the steps, and ring the bell.

“Then you can come back,” she added, “and help the man to carry in the boxes.”

CHAPTER XII

THE bell at No. 9, Sherlock Terrace happened to be broken, and after futile jerks, and repeated knockings, the door was opened by a thin little woman in a dirty pink muslin, with her sandy front locks screwed up in curling-pins, who, at the sight of the cab and its contents, threw up her hands in an ecstasy of rapture, and running down the path, called out—

“Sure, I was washing in the back, and never heard ye, and I didn’t expect ye on this train. Come in, come in!”

“Oh, ye need not alarm yerself,” rejoined Mrs. Flynn tartly, descending as she spoke, and driving the fat children up the steps, “I’m coming into me own house. Here, what’s yer name?”—to Johanna—“give a hand with them boxes.”

“And who on the living earth have ye got hold of now, Annie?” demanded the woman in the curling-pins, “yon bare-headed bosthoon, wid the big eyes?”

"She's me new servant, and a fine, able-bodied girl. I'll tell ye all about her afther a bit—run down now, and put on the kettle, and get me a cup of tay."

The other, whose name was Lucy Cullen, was half-sister to Mrs. Flynn—half-sister, half-servant, and whole toady. An unlucky turn of fortune's wheel had thrown her at her sister's feet, where she had remained for seven long years, ever hoping for escape to offer, in the shape of a husband. Vain, weak, lazy, and thirty-seven years of age—nothing supported her but a prodigious vanity, and the promises of a grimy fortune-teller.

Whilst Miss Lucy hurried downstairs on clattering, high-heeled shoes, Johanna helped to carry in the luggage, and witnessed the subsequent altercation with the cabman. During the time that Mrs. Flynn was storming and raving, she had an opportunity to look about, and was amazed and awed at the mixture of squalor and grandeur which composed her surroundings. The windows were grey with dust, the curtains were old and ragged, long cobwebs hung from their cornices; but there were grand pictures, and little fans and looking-glasses on the walls, a carpet and armchairs, and lovely green and red vases on the mantelpiece (one shilling and ninepence

the pair, had she but known, but to the ignorant eye they appeared priceless).

"You can go downstairs, what's yer name," said Mrs. Flynn, recovering breath from her recent exertions.

"Johanna Daly, if ye plase, ma'am."

"Very well, go and help with the tea, and redd up the kitchen. Ye can have the little room off it for yerself. Here, before ye go, take off these."

And as she spoke, Mrs. Flynn held out two good-sized, useful-looking feet, encased in muddy laced boots.

Johanna having removed these very clumsily, inquired—

"What am I to do with them, ma'am?"

"Why, clean them, av course, and now go down, and hurry up the tea, and Lucy."

"She's a queer sort of creature you have below," remarked Lucy, who was sharing her sister's meal, "but a wonderful worker, I'll lay. She's took off her cloak, and set to at once—she's scouring, this blessed minute!"

"So best. I suppose the kitchen hasn't had more nor a lick and a promise, since I was in it. And what way is old Miss Fergus?"

Miss Fergus was a permanent lodger, who paid

Mrs. Flynn a guinea a week for her room, meals, and attendance.

"Faix, she's had a go of bronchitis, and is very shaky and full of fancies. She's had me heart scalded, all the time ye wor away, it was just ring, ring, ring, all day. Tell me how ye got hold of the girl so smart, for we know very well the registry offices will do no more for ye."

"As if I'd take in their trash!" protested Mrs. Flynn, with her mouth full, "trapesing thieves, that think of nothing but dress and soldiers," and she proceeded in a few voluble sentences to relate her experience in the railway carriage.

"I declare she carried on like a wild animal at first, but now she's as quiet as a lamb. She knows she's as well here as anywhere—a nice, genteel place—and it isn't everyone, would take her widout a character, a big Kerry colleen, that never had a hat on her head, a sort of curiosity that talks Irish, and can neither read or write. But ye have only to look in her face, to see she's a good girl. Mind the soft innocent eye of her! And I'll keep her a while, anyhow."

"She ought to have a lot of work in her!" claimed Lucy.

"She's a fine, handsome girl, and terribly quiet."

"Oh, I don't call her good-looking. I don't like them big elephants."

"Never mind that, *your* likes is of no account in this house. She has a light foot under her, and the children have took to her. She'll do the washing and scrubbing and heavy work—carrying coals and water, and making beds and sweeping and washing up. I'll do the nice cooking myself, and ye can answer the door, and wait at table, for the whole of the Murphys is coming up in three weeks, to stop the winter."

"So ye did a fine stroke of business, Annie, me dear, when ye were on the holiday—'tis you, as are the clever wan!"

"I'll need to be clever—seeing I've no one to look out for me but meself. Just a poor widow woman, left with this house and two children on me hands—forby yerself."

"Ye needn't be a widow long, unless ye plase, and that ye know," rejoined her flatterer.

"Oh, go on wid ye! Here, take the tay-pot, and tell her to put water on it for herself, and cut some bread. I'll go bail, wake tay and dry bread is a fine trate for the likes of her."

But in this surmise Mrs. Flynn was painfully mistaken.

For some days, everything was strange to Johanna—from the milkman's hurried compliments, and the postman's startling "rat-tat"; but being anxious to improve, she soon picked up a little cooking; she learnt to make milk puddings, and dry toast, and to poach eggs for Miss Fergus. She also learnt to speak English with more facility. She lit the fires, and scrubbed, and washed, and polished, and it was all done in pure gratitude, and in the hope of favours to come.

Yes, Johanna was indeed a treasure—a nine days' wonder—said Mrs. Flynn to herself. She never asked to go out, she never asked for porter, or for wages, she never answered back, and she slaved incessantly from six in the morning (when she quitted her windowless lair off the kitchen) until eleven at night, when she returned there, to rest her weary and aching limbs.

At the end of a fortnight the girl went up, and knocked timidly at the dining-room door, and in answer to a shrill "Come in," presented herself before Mrs. Flynn, saying:

"I've come, ma'am, about the bit of a note, ye promised me—a note, av ye plase, to Mary at the Cross."

"Oh, yes, I remember," confessed her mistress reluctantly, "do you know her address?"

"I do so—Mary Nolan, Heffernan's Cross, Kerry."

"Very well, do you want it to-day?"

"If it was convenient to ye, ma'am, just a line to say I'm well, for I'm afraid she has been terribly anxious."

For all her meanness and niggardly, overreaching ways, Mrs. Flynn had some glimmerings of justice, and she said :

"Reach me down the ink, Johanna, and I'll write the letter now."

And she promptly proceeded to fulfil her promise, whilst Johanna stood opposite to her—grateful and admiring—dictating in slow, unready sentences, and envious of the wonderful power of a little mite of a thing called a pen.

"DEAR MARY,—Here I am in Dublin, and not at your aunt's at all, but Number 9, Sherlock Terrace, Rathmines. The bit of paper got blown out of the window, and so I could not find yer aunt. A kind lady brought me home—here I am working for her ever since as general, learning to cook, and do up rooms, and wash, and mind children. She's writing for me now, to ask ye to send me the address where yer

aunt lives, and I'll go off to her as soon as ever I get it. I expect Maggie was in a fine commotion, when she missed me. Ye may tell any that asks, that I am snug and well. So no more at present from your true friend,

"JOHANNA DALY."

Mrs. Flynn addressed the envelope, and put the letter inside, saying, "Leave it here, Johanna, and I'll stamp it and post it myself."

"I'm wholly obliged to ye, ma'am, for yer kindness. And how long do ye think it will be, till the answer reaches me?"

"I couldn't say. If they are not near the post, maybe a week, maybe two."

"Thank ye again, ma'am, and may the Almighty send ye yer health and blessing."

"All right, Johanna. Now, as this is a wet day, you may as well go upstairs, and take off all the carpets, and wash the stairs. If you are quick, you will be done by supper-time."

After supper, Mrs. Flynn drew Lucy's attention to the still unposted letter, and talked it over with her parasite. If she despatched the letter, the result would no doubt be, that Johanna would at once be claimed, and would leave immediately,—and the

Murphys coming in a week She would be terribly put about.

“Why not keep it back a couple of weeks, till the Murphys was settled in, and then send it?” suggested Lucy; “the place is elegant practice for the likes of Johanna. I’ll put it by,” she said jocularly, “and keep it safe, for a while.”

Lazy Lucy was keenly alive to what the departure of Johanna, and the arrival of the Murphys, would mean to *her*.

“No, no, no,” cried her sister, struggling with a desperate temptation, “if I was to go and deceive a poor creature like Johanna, it would be like cheating a child, and I’d never have luck or grace. Here’s the stamp—you go out and post it, Lucy, this minute, and then it’s done.”

Lucy took the letter without further protest, and left the house immediately, but she called in for a word with a friend at No. 13, and there posted the letter in a kitchen fire.

Nevertheless Johanna, in her dark dog-hole off the kitchen, slept happily that night, for her letter was at last on its way to Kerry—and she was already in Kerry in her dreams!

CHAPTER XIII

THE morning of Johanna's departure Mrs. Daly "slep' it out," as she termed it—a by no means uncommon occurrence. Johnny happened to be from home, and when his wife opened her eyes, she experienced a puzzling sensation. What was it all? What ailed her? Why was the house so quiet? The sunlight was blazing in, the clock pointed to half-past nine, and there was not a stir in the kitchen. Where was Johanna? She called. No reply. Finally she rose in a passion and flung barefooted into the kitchen. There was no sign of a fire beyond a heap of white turf ashes, nor was the place touched since the previous night. She ran across, and screamed up the ladder. Then she climbed it, but only to discover the loft room empty. The bed had been slept in, but where were the girl's shoes and cloak, and rack comb? Where was Johanna? The startled fury hurried below, and dashed open the house door, only to be immediately confronted by a craning and

interrogative crowd of geese and chickens, sucking-calves and injured pigs ; they were demanding their breakfast, and every countenance wore the same expression—*where was Johanna?* If an accurate reply had been possible, at that very moment, Johanna was getting into the train at Moher station.

Then ensued a wild outcry from her home. A vigorous search commenced, also a great deal of talk—but there was no trace of the girl, nor was Mrs. Daly's violent language of the slightest avail in tracking the runaway. Moreover, she was painfully alive to the unpleasant fact, that she must either work hard, or engage a servant.

Her revenge was never likely to be accomplished now—the bird had escaped from the snare of the fowler. And, besides all this, Maggie had to put up with the jeers of her enemies, the lamentations of Timothy, and the coarse abuse of her ally, Ninny—who laid the whole blame of the failure of the match at *her* door. Ninny was most righteously angry, and unquestionably out of pocket. The pair exchanged words. They stated their *true* opinions of one another, and the result was an everlasting breach between them. And this was not the sum

total of the legacy of ill luck which the girl had bequeathed to her stepmother. There was Johnny nearly out of his mind, with losing by one fell swoop his valuable daughter and twenty golden sovereigns—no tale or tidings to be had of the girl, and the house kept just anyhow.

At first Maggie, who, in spite of her appreciation of ease and luxury, had a frugal mind, decided to do without a help, and manage the job herself. But Daly, who all his life had been accustomed to early hours, cleanliness, and good plain food, rebelled. The place was like a sty, he declared ; he never got a bit before ten o'clock, and then the bread was raw, the stirabout burnt, the animals outside were mad with the hunger, and the cows going back on their milk ! He brooded over this state of affairs, until at last one day, when there was nothing for dinner but the heel of a dry "baker's " loaf, he broke out into open mutiny, and a terrible domestic engagement took place, Maggie, at the top of her voice, piling name after name on the man, drowning all his frenzied efforts to speak, by sheer force of lung power.

" I'd never have looked at ye," she screeched, " a little, old, dried-up miserly stick, with a pair of eyes like a poisoned rat, but that I could pay out Johanna,

in raal good style, for her underhand schaming with Shamus!"

In a sudden impulse of fury Daly raised his stick—the next moment the screaming virago had deluged his legs with a pot of scalding water—an "accident" that caused him to keep his bed for many days. Maggie was compelled to get a servant, but although several came, none remained. They left, hastening down the boreen with an alarming account of "the place," and declaring far and near that Shevauneen was one of the saints out of heaven, to have stood it for so long. At length a poor relation volunteered to step into the breach—it being this post, or the work-house! She became Maggie's drudge, and the scared spectator of many a fierce encounter between Mrs. Daly and old Johnny—who prudently entrenched himself in the loft, and merely sallied down to meals. The pair led a veritable cat and dog life, and the pup naturally sided with the dog, his master; whilst the poor relation enlisted on the stronger side, and took the part of Maggie. But the sympathy of the neighbours was of a very moderate degree.

All this time Mary and Dan held their peace—but as weeks went by, and there was no word from Johanna, nor any letter from Dublin, they became

uneasy, and Mary penned a note to her relation, asking how Johanna Daly was getting on? for she had never sent a line since she left home three weeks back. In answer to this, came a reply by return of post, protesting that Mary must be joking, for no such young woman as her friend had ever been heard of in Eccles Street—much less seen. Mary handed this letter to Dan, and they stared at one another with white faces. Tim, the porter, declared that he had put her in the train at Mallow. What in God's name had happened to Johanna Daly?

Their anxiety respecting her was as nothing to her impatience for tidings of them—for news of Shamus. Each morning she eagerly awaited the postman, and each day received a negative in answer to a question as to whether he had a letter for her? It was not to be supposed that such a handsome girl as Mrs. Flynn's new servant would fail to escape the notice of the policeman, baker, or milkman. Indeed, even the ribald newspaper boy was profoundly impressed. Johanna became his first love! But although the guardian of the law strolled slowly by Sherlock Terrace thrice a day (and the Dublin Metropolitan Police are a splendid body of men), although the baker plied her with buns, and the milkman with

compliments, the girl was irresponsible and stupid. The only man she made free with was the postman—and he was the father of a family, and had grizzly hair. To him she looked for her release—the key of her prison! At first, when she timidly asked if there was a letter for her? he said:

“For who, me girl?”

“Meself,” she faltered.

“And who is meself, darlin’?”

“Johanna Daly—from Kerry.”

“No, not to-day. So you are from Kerry, are ye? They keep all the beauties of Ireland there.”

“Have you ever been in Kerry?” she asked, with glistening eyes.

“Faix, no. I’m a Carlow man. Well, I’ll strive and bring ye a fine long letter—from yer boy, I take it?”

“No, he is in the Indies—this great while back.”

“Where, me heart?”

“Oh, where the foreign ships goes round to beyond the Blasket Mountains. But I’m expecting a line from Mary, this many days.”

“All right, ye may depend I’ll see to it,” he answered, with reassuring confidence, as he went thundering down the steps. But, alas! every

morning it was the same story—a shake of his head, a mere circular, a bill for Mrs. Flynn, or letters for the lodgers. These were numerous. The Murphys had arrived in force, and every room in the house was crammed. Johanna's quarters were in a dark lair off the kitchen—its only light was borrowed from that apartment when the door stood open—nevertheless the girl was deeply thankful to have even this den to herself, and made it habitable as far as soap and water and faithful scrubbing could go. On the wall was a fresh row of black marks, indicating how many days Johanna had been at Sherlock Terrace; if you count them up carefully you will find that they come to sixty-one. During these sixty-one days, the stupid Kerry girl had learnt many things, as, for instance, that ham and bacon were not meat; that when a lodger asked if there were any sweets? a pennyworth of peppermints on a plate was not precisely what was expected!

The poor creature was clean and willing, and nervously anxious to please, but her blunders were monstrous; and after a short trial Mrs. Flynn confined the operations of her "general" exclusively to the lower regions: she was a splendid worker, though her innocence and ignorance were incredible.

One evening her mistress suddenly descended on Johanna and said,

"Well, me girl, have you had no letter?"

"No, ma'am," she answered, and her eyes filled, and her lips quivered.

"They are maybe displeased about something—or sick," suggested Mrs. Flynn, in a cheerful key; "you had better settle here for a while. I'll give you good wages—six whole pounds a year—what do you say?"

Johanna made no reply.

"I declare, it's a grand beginning for one that has to be taught every blessed thing. Oh, I'll make a servant of you yet, Johanna!"

"Thank you, ma'am," she faltered in a whisper.

"And here's a sovereign to buy yourself a good black gown and caps and aprons. Ye must not be going out without a cap on; it's not as if ye were in the middle of a bog!"

"No, God knows I wish it was!" she murmured.

"What's that?" gazing at her sharply. "Well, me girl, so that's settled, and I'll lay out the money for ye, and get the dress made—won't that be the thing?"

"Thank you, ma'am," repeated the unhappy slavey as mechanically as a talking doll; and when her

employer had taken herself (and her wages) upstairs, Johanna withdrew into her hole like some stricken animal, and crouched upon the side of her low bed, and wept. Oh! was she to live here always, and never see a friend, or hear the Irish tongue again? What ailed Mary not to write? and how was she ever to get tale or tiding of Shamus? She felt as if she had strayed away from everything, and every creature she ever cared for, and was hidden and powerless in a situation, from which she could not escape, and where she would *never* be found!

CHAPTER XIV

AND now to follow Shamus McCarthy to the Far East. His lot was cast in pleasant places—manlike, he had the best of it! Whilst his beautiful, faithful Johanna was an unpaid drudge, whom we left in a species of black hole, weeping salt tears of disappointment and despair, Shamus, smart as uniform and a regimental barber could make him, is driving down to the Mulkapett sports along with half a dozen other Fusiliers as lighthearted as himself.

The army suits Shamus, and he suits the army. Well set up, and alert, an Anamully cane swinging in his hand, he looks a soldier, and we find it difficult to recognise in this smart young corporal, with his cropped locks and imposing moustache, the Shamus of the Cross Roads and the boreen! He was wonderfully quick and adaptable, and fell into his new rôle as if to the manner born. He liked rifle-shooting, he took vast pride in his company and himself, his singing and dancing were the delight and

boast of his barrack-room, and he was quicker on his legs than any man in his regiment—a big word—and had carried off the two mile and hurdles, as well as the hundred and fifty yards. Yes, he was a gay, good-looking soldier, fairly steady, popular with both his officers and comrades, and well content with his lot. He was young—now was the time to see the world. The cantonment life pleased him: there were dances and theatricals, a reading-room, a gymnasium, and—the Gorah Bazaar. It is true that he had been a good deal disappointed with respect to the shooting. Still, he had bought an old blunderbuss out of the city of Hyderabad, and had had some capital sport after duck and snipe.

And what of Johanna? Was her memory becoming a little dim? No, she was not forgotten. Shamus was saving steadily—*vide* his bank-book—and his winnings at rifle matches and sports had brought the total up to the respectable sum of twenty-five pounds. He was also attending school, in order to qualify for sergeant; but he hated letter-writing (like many of his superiors), and he assured himself that Johanna was there in Kerry all right! This gay, sunny life, with its clashing bands, bugles, and parades, had certainly pushed her somewhat out of

his thoughts. No, there was not another woman, though Sergeant-Major Hogan had invited him in to tea, and he had been formally introduced to a splendid girl—Mrs. Hogan's own sister. She was remarkably dark, her eyes were as black as sloes, she wore a string of red beads, and a lot of powder on her face, and giggled, and made eyes and called him "Mr. McCarthy" every minute—but she was not in the same county as Johanna. The sergeant had winked, and told him she had a heap of money (her father being a contractor), but he had laughed. What was her money to him? He had had a caution over women with money! And though Miss Josephs beamed and gushed, and asked him to call, he gave the sergeant-major's quarters a wide berth for some time.

The letter from Mary had been duly received: the news it contained had caused Shamus to be grave and silent for two whole days, but he plucked up his spirits, and answered it by the outgoing mail. He was saving hard, and he would borrow the rest of the passage money he hoped to send home for Johanna by Christmas! Then he posted this letter, and with a light heart set off for Moulali racecourse, which lies about four miles north of Trimulgherry

barracks. The stand, and both sides of the course, were thronged with soldiers and natives in all sorts of conveyances, from a landau, aged sixty years, to a brand new jutka—the cheap little covered cart so much in vogue in Madras. The officers of the huge garrison were present to a man, as well as many brilliantly dressed ladies, and most of the nobles and Nawabs out of Hyderabad city, with their dashing four-in-hands, and other fine equipages.

Between the crowd, the racing (ever dear to an Irishman), and a glass of arrack, Shamus felt elated. His spirits invariably rose on the slightest encouragement, and he was enjoying himself prodigiously. In passing behind the stand to reach another part of the course, he came on a driver cruelly belabouring a miserable jutka pony. The jutka was packed with five fat men, and stuck fast in the sand. In spite of the poor animal's desperate struggles he could not move his solid load, who never attempted to alight, but sat passive as stuffed figures.

"Quit that, will ye!" cried Shamus excitedly; "give over bating, come off the roof, and give a hand to the machine!" and suiting the action to the word, he himself put his shoulder to the wheel.

But instead of answering, the driver yelled out a

bad name, and continued his vigorous operations with the whip.

"I'll have ye out of that, me son!" cried Shamus in wrath.

"Arrah! can't ye lave him alone," urged his comrade; "ye'll only get into trouble. Ye know there's always the divil's own trouble, if we have a row with a native."

"Yer sowl to glory! I don't care." Shamus was already on the vehicle. He took hold of the driver, wrenched the whip out of his hand, and hit him several smart blows.

"How do ye like that now yerself?" he inquired; "a nice little bating will do ye no harm."

The driver screamed and struggled, when, to the intense excitement of an eager crowd attracted by the scrimmage, Shamus seized him by the belt, and threw him off the roof of the jutka on to the course, where he lay a crumpled mass—feigning death.

"There, now ye've done it!" said his comrade; "I don't doubt he'll just go and die on purpose to annoy ye. Ye can't touch a native of these parts, but he comes to pieces in yer hands! Here's the police, and ye must face it down."

Sad to relate, "facing it down" was hopelessly out of the question. It is true the native was a good

deal more frightened than hurt, but the colonel was sternly resolved to give Corporal McCarthy a severe lesson.

"Why did you fight with the man?" expostulated his captain.

"Well, sir, for his impudence to me, and for his cruelty to the pony."

"That's all right, but you know very well, you must never raise your hand to a native."

"Faix, I know *now*; but why wouldn't I, sir, when he earned it? And sure many a time I bate his betters, and bate them badly, too, and not a word said."

"I'm afraid the colonel will say a good deal, besides handing you over to the civil power 'as an example.'"

"What's that, sir?"

"Well, it may mean jail."

"Oh, Mother of God! am I to be disgraced for life, because I give a native a couple of slaps wid the whip, and heaved him off the machine?"

It proved to be three months' detention in that beautiful castellated building that strangers are so surprised to hear, is Trimulgherry military prison! When at last Shamus was released, a sadder if not wiser man, who had lost his corporal stripe, and been

fined and put under stoppages, he discovered that this was not the last drop in his cup. Misfortunes generally travel in company. His final and worst misfortune was ill tidings which arrived in a letter from Mary of the Cross ; it said :—

“Shamus McCarthy, I am sorry to send you bad news, but Johanna is gone. She left this, as she told you in the letter, and Danny walked her over to Moher and left her safe in charge of Tim Brady, and Tim put her in a Dublin carriage at Mallow Junction—that’s the last eye that saw her ! She never went near me aunt’s at all, and then not a sign or line of her anywhere. She had terrible hard times, poor girl, and maybe she’s in a better world ; but there’s no word whatever of her in *this*—and there’s no call to be sending the passage money.

“Hoping you are getting good health,

“I remain, your friend,

“MARY NOLAN.”

This blow, coming on the top of his keenly felt disgrace, overwhelmed poor private McCarthy, who appeared to be completely stunned. He now rarely opened his lips, even to his “Towney,” but moped in corners alone. He scarcely ate a morsel, and deserted the canteen and recreation ground ; in short, he was a changed man—a glum, hollow-eyed, melan-

choly spectre of the Shamus who had formerly been the life of his barrack-room. The only objects from which he seemed to derive comfort were the two mute companions—his briarwood pipe, and the society of a certain lean, black pariah dog, with glittering yellow eyes,—the property of one of the drums. After a time came the reaction, and the silent, stricken soldier broke out into a reckless, rollicking character, who, had he not already lost his stripe, would have undoubtedly been reduced. What, he asked himself, was the good of scraping and saving and learning and conduct, when *she* was dead?

What did he care what happened to him now? Johanna was never a girl to go to the bad, or be led away—she was a different sort—and she was dead. Since she was gone—she that he had been striving for, he might as well take his fling, and spend his pay like such chaps as Jerry Kane and “Nosey” Burke—what was the use of keeping himself up?

With unexpected promptitude came the reply to this question. He must “keep himself up,” for the credit of the regiment, and for his own name, as a soldier of the Queen. There was trouble in South Africa—there would be fighting. Bazaar gup was greedily listened to, newspapers in the company-room were read, re-read, and eagerly discussed. At last war

was proclaimed, and at once the barracks were humming like a hive. The men were in a fever to be off.

"Oh, bedad, maybe ye will get enough of it before yer done; don't be onaisy," remarked an old soldier who had smelt powder; "and I tell ye this—though I like fighting in *raison*—that when the bullets are spitting round you, and the shells all a-screaming, and you going into the belly of it all, if a man stands up, and says he is not afraid, I say, he is a liar!"

"If ye give us any more of that sort of lip," cried Shamus, deliberately taking down his belt, "I'll give ye something as will make yer afraid—of *me*."

* * * * *

At daybreak one morning the troop-trains which steamed up into North Trimulgherry siding, were packed with a dense crowd in khaki. Bands played, friends waved, the men shouted themselves hoarse. To the stirring tune of "Soldiers of the Queen," the long transport moved slowly over the brown burnt track, amid ringing cheers,—and it carried many a soldier of the Queen, upon his last journey!

CHAPTER XV

JOHANNA DALY was nearly as much affected by her change of circumstances as her far-away sweetheart, the smart young soldier. Six months' service, of a different description to his, had almost metamorphosed the beauty of the boreen. The girl's thick, crisp hair was crowned by a cap; instead of a woollen skirt and cotton jacket, she wore a tight-fitting black gown and white apron—a livery which transformed Shevauneen of the Glen as completely as a scarlet uniform, had altered Shamus, the game-keeper.

Her hardy constitution was beginning to feel the effects of continuous work; scanty food and lack of fresh air told their pitiful tale. Her once rounded cheeks were white and hollow, her great tragic eyes looked larger than ever; these were the eyes of some imprisoned dumb creature, with a breaking heart.

* * * * *

After several weeks of patient waiting on the post-man, Johanna had summoned sufficient courage to

ascend to the back parlour, and beseech of Mrs. Flynn to write her yet one more letter to Mary. Mrs. Flynn pleaded "an awful pain between the shoulders," and transferred the task to Lucy, who was, she stated, "a wonder with the pen," and Lucy accepted the office with voluble alacrity.

Once in the kitchen, Miss Cullen took a chair, leant her elbows on the table, and raising her cunning little face to Johanna, said—

"See now, my good girl, I'll write your letter home with a heart and a half—and a long one at that—but what will you do for *me*?"

"What can I do for you?" inquired the unhappy ignoramus. "Sure, anything at all, if you will write for me this day to Mary Nolan."

"Well, I'm wanting to go an excursion to the Isle of Man—a two days' trip—with friends; and herself above, is dead against it, the house being pretty full. See now, if you will engage to do *my* work, I'll do yours."

"To be sure I will," replied Johanna eagerly.

"Ye will have to answer the door, and lay the cloth, and take up tea to the drawing-room—and Miss Fergus, and put her to bed, and get her up of a morning."

"Sure I often do that—that's no trouble at all."

"Ah, well, there we differ. *I* think she is an old torment, and a blister, and I wish she was in Mount Jerome! So that's settled, and if ye will hand me the ink and my writing-case—they are on the top of the meat safe in the larder—I'll start at once, and pay my share of the bargain now."

In an incredibly short time Lucy's order was executed, and she was smoothing out a crumpled sheet of notepaper, and dipping the stump of a quill pen into her penny inkpot, only waiting for Johanna to begin to dictate. Johanna stood erect behind the little stooping figure, endeavouring to put burning thoughts into forcible language. At first, these thoughts flowed into fiery, passionate Irish, but were gradually changed into the formal English tongue, and a broken torrent of interrogation, anxiety and reproach; the words came so thick and fast, interrupted by an occasional sob, that it was as much as Miss Cullen's pen could do to accompany their dictation. She was astonished at the pent-up flood of feeling that broke forth from this silent, hard-working, Kerry girl; even her selfish, withered heart was momentarily touched by the picture of anguish which she was transcribing.

"All them months, and not a word or token, Mary, and you may be dead for what I can tell; and I am here alone, among strangers, not ever seeing a dog I know, not hearing a word of the Irish! What ails you? Mary Nolan, I cry on you in the name of the Mother of God to write and tell me what is passing! What way is my father? and did he take on at my going away into service? What way are all the poor calves and chickens I left to mind themselves? And beyond everything, Mary, is there no news, or no letter for me, from the Indies? Mrs. Flynn, where I'm living, as cook and general servant, wrote one note to you herself, telling you how I lost your aunt's address and how I was here, and no answer has come. She thinks that maybe you are all angry with me; but whatever notion my father takes, it was you yourself put me on to coming to Dublin, and I know *you* are my friend. Write me a few lines, Mary Nolan, for the sake of the Blessed Virgin, and because my heart is broken with waiting for news of any sort. Sometimes I never close an eye all night, wondering, wondering what has happened. And I can hardly drag myself about the house; I feel as if I was under some sort of curse—which may the saints forbid!

"I am getting six pounds a year in wages—but clothes has cost a lot, so I've no money put by yet, or I'd send it to you, and welcome. I shall slip this into the post myself, and so I know you will get it soon, and I am your loving friend, J. DALY."

When this was finished, Lucy crossed her "t's" and read it out aloud. It apparently gave satisfaction to Johanna, who said :—

"If you will put it in the envelope, and stamp it, I'll take it out to the pillar now, and I'm for ever obliged to you, and God bless you!"

An envelope and stamp were promptly procured, and whilst Johanna went away to the coal-cellar (in response to a scream from Mrs. Flynn to "Carry coal to the drawing-room!") her temporary secretary had ample time to reflect, on what the posting of the letter would mean to her! It meant, that Johanna would certainly go to her original destination; it meant, that a useless, lazy creature would undoubtedly take her place, and she would be stuck at home, working from week's end to week's end; no holidays, no days out with Joe. She would have to "take on" the bedrooms, coal-carrying, and Miss Fergus. Her little, self-indulgent soul revolted at the prospect.

After all, in this world, it was everyone for herself; and why should she put out her hand and let this great, stupid Kerry girl go free? And here she was now, coming hurrying downstairs.

"If ye have it ready I'll take it to the post; there's a lot more letters"—displaying half a dozen.

"What shall I put on the envelope?" asked Lucy, looking up, pen in hand.

"'Mary Nolan, Heffernan's Cross, County Kerry.' I'll just get my cape cloak, for it's a teeming wet night."

As Johanna dived into her den, Lucy dipped her pen in the ink, and wrote :—

"TO MARY NOLAN,
" *At the Back of Beyond,*
" *Nowhere.*"

Then she stamped the envelope, and gave it to Johanna, who took it, and stared hard at the superscription with glistening, longing eyes.

"Oh, if I could only get into the letter, and go with it!" she exclaimed.

"Yer a size too large I'm thinking," rejoined Lucy with a snigger. "Run, me good girl, and put those letters in the pillar, before ye carry up the supper tray."

And Johanna needed no second bidding, but hurried out into the wet, black night, with an eager foot, and radiant countenance.

CHAPTER XVI

IT is superfluous to mention that there was no reply to a letter addressed to "The Back of Beyond," and Johanna by degrees became enveloped in a cloud of despair. She discovered, that although she had nothing to hope for, and daily wished she were dead, yet she was still living, and working, and eating and sleeping; for it takes a good deal more than meagre fare, and misery, to kill a healthy young woman. Indeed, the unhappy slavey had no time to mope, or to sicken. She had far too much to do. It was she, who lit the fires, prepared breakfast, swept and washed, and carried coals and water, and from the "top back" to the "front parlour" the call all day long was "Johanna! Johanna! *Johanna!*"

Lazy Lucy resembled a roguish horse in double harness; she made a great show of high stepping and action, but it was her quiet, dogged companion who accomplished all the collar work, and drew the domestic coach. If Lucy waited at table, it was

Johanna who cooked the meals and carried up the heavy trays. Lucy opened the door, lit the gas, and talked vivaciously to the lodgers, and was always to be seen about the hall or stairs, bustling and busy; and she received and pocketed the tips which were really earned by the poor general down below. However, Lucy Cullen never could keep a farthing, much less five shillings or half a sovereign; most of her money was lavished upon tawdry finery, such as cheap white gloves, white veils, and gaudy parasols, or the wreckage of some smart lady's wardrobe picked up in an old-clothes shop. In a purple velvet coat (actually made by La Ferrière), a lilac silk skirt, white shoes, and a picture hat (a great bargain), she would sally forth each Sunday in order to walk with her young man. Mrs. Flynn gladly assented to these promenades, being extremely anxious to marry off Lucy; but so far none of these walks had terminated at a church door. Mrs. Flynn's aspirations were but a dim reflection of her half-sister's own desires. She loathed the lodging-house, with its early regular hours, constant monotonous work, and stated time for meals. It certainly was not Miss Cullen's fault that she had not left it years ago. She had gone to reckless outlay and much

personal inconvenience for the sake of a good-looking gasfitter, but all in vain; he was not to be tempted by a fuzzy fringe, white feathers, or even a pink sunshade. The milkman, a smart, rosy-cheeked boy from Saggart, had flatly refused her hand. A window cleaner (vicariously employed on the terrace) was now her last hope. He had been a soldier, but had taken his discharge—it was hinted that he had got into trouble. “Joe” was a well-set-up fellow, with a plausible tongue and a rollicking eye, and had graciously agreed to “walk out” with Miss Cullen. Thanks to her prudent sister (who declared that she would not suffer Lucy to spend every shilling on her back) she was not altogether penniless, and what with her wages (salary she called it) and tips, she had a few pounds in her post-office book. These savings were no secret to her friend of the merry eye, and he was not ashamed to borrow money from his girl, nor did he withhold from her the pleasure of “standing treat.” They had now been “walking out” for more than twelve months, but as yet there was no talk of marriage.

If Mrs. Flynn and Lucy had been devout Catholics, Johanna would have been brought into touch with her religion, and have made the acquaintance of the

parish priest, and possibly of some good nuns. But her mistress was a Protestant; she and the two fat children, with shining faces, well-oiled plaits, in their best clothes, duly attended church every Sunday. Miss Cullen never entered a place of worship, declaring that the atmosphere disagreed with her, and that she was always "took bad." She spent the Sabbath mornings tacking together her tawdry finery, dressing her hair, and preparing for the grand promenade in the afternoon. Johanna went to Mass at a handsome chapel, not far from Sherlock Terrace, and, strange to say, even that short absence was grumbled over, and grudged to her, by her two tyrants.

If Johanna had not been a slow-witted, stupid creature, she would have gone to see the priest, explained her situation, and asked him to advise her. Unfortunately, this was about the last idea to enter her head. The splendid Mass, beautiful painted windows, the pictures, the organ, the gorgeous vestments of the clergy, overawed poor timid Johanna—accustomed to the bare walls of Dulane Chapel, with old Father Scanlan saying the Mass, and preaching a homely sermon in Irish. She felt herself too humble to venture to approach Our Lady's Altar within six yards, and knelt in an obscure corner, an unnoticed

worshipper, telling her beads, and uttering heartfelt prayers for Shamus and herself. She invariably stole out before the grand congregation had begun to move, and making no acquaintances, hurried home to her domestic duties. Sunday evenings the lodgers were out, the house was quiet, and Johanna would bring forth her sole treasure, a photograph, and study it long by the light of the kitchen gas. With her eyes bent on the portrait, her head supported by her two hands, her thoughts far away, she was suddenly brought to her senses by a violent thump on her shoulders, and she turned to discover Lucy Cullen grinning behind her, under her dirty white feathers.

"And so that's how you spend your time!" she cried; and before Johanna could interfere she had pounced on the sacred photograph. "And a soldier, no less—a corporal! Yes, and a mighty nice-looking fellow! Now, where in the name of goodness, did the likes of you come across the likes of him?"

"I've known him all my life. Will ye give him back if you please?" and Johanna's voice was tremulous.

"There's for ye, then. Where is he?"

"In a place they call the Indies."

"And how long since you saw him?"

"One year and three months."

"When is he coming back?"

"God knows!"

"My Joe has a friend in the Donnybrooks, and he says they are great fellows—just terrors for fighting and fun. Well, well, well! And to think of *you*, so quiet, and so backward, being engaged to a soldier! How long were you walking out together?"

Johanna the inexperienced, took this query *au pied de la lettre*, and replied:

"Let me think. It's a good while. It's eight or nine years since, I mind the day, when we come back out of the town; he was only a gossoon, and he giv' me a bag of hazel nuts."

"And how soon after that did he ax ye to marry?"

"Augh, sure we were only children!" protested Johanna. "He asked me to marry him, just fifteen months ago."

This intelligence proved most cheering to her oft-disappointed listener. Her pale, cunning little face lit up with a smile, and she began to enlarge upon the advantage of a sweetheart that you could, so to speak, put your hand on, instead of a fellow that was ten thousand miles away. She became so loquacious, and confidential, that her example was contagious,

and simple Johanna, for the first time for months, unlocked her heart, and, drawn on by her sly companion, was led to tell of her unwelcome stepmother, and her hateful match, the true reason of her flight from home. Yes; word by word, Lucy the subtle drew all her life's history from the unsuspecting colleen. She heard of the comfortable cottage and cows, of the pigs, and the pup, of Ninny Quain, Mary Nolan, and the neighbours, as well as of the fair Kerry mountains and lakes; the gorse, the fuchsias, and the ferns; it appeared to be, as it were, a heavenly land, flowing with milk and honey. This evening seemed to establish a bond between Lucy and Johanna. Lucy knew about Shamus—had seen his picture and praised his face—and even to hear his name uttered aloud, was a comfort to this isolated creature. Now and then of a night, when all was “redd up” and put away, Lucy stole down from the back parlour (where there was more scolding than sympathy) in order to pour out her hopes, and plans, and woes into the ear of the quiet, self-contained drudge, who proved an admirable listener—though her attitude as an adviser was less satisfactory. When Lucy bemoaned her conviction of Joe's slipperiness, and how he was “drawing off,” in order to take on with a widow in

Liffey Street, she gazed with grave-eyed amazement, and being requested to offer an opinion, simply rejoined :

“Sure, an’ if ye suspicion he does not want to marry ye, why don’t ye let him go?” Such was her innocent suggestion.

“That’s just where the shoe pinches, me fine Kerry girl! If I let *him* go, I’m mortal afraid I’ll never get another. Ye never seen my Joe yet—but I declare if ye saw him, you’d love him! and men is terribly scarce these times, and the young ones are so pushing and impident; by me soul, they walk off with your comrade as soon as look at you! It takes me all me time to keep them off Joe. A woman is never sure of a man, till she has the ring on her finger.”

“Is that so?” exclaimed Johanna—and her thoughts flew back to Shamus, and his oath that evening in the Glen.

“It is so, by dad; and though Joe may hold off, and go sneaking over to Liffey Street to make up to that Jew woman, that sells bits of broken old furniture, I’ll have him yet!” And with this threat, she went out of the kitchen.

* * * * *

Three weeks had elapsed since Lucy had despatched her bogus letter to "Nowhere," and Johanna's long and sorely-tried patience at last gave way; she felt desperate; mortally sick in mind and body. Christmas had come and gone, and she was forgotten. The new year was advancing into spring, but it was still winter with Johanna. As she lay on her hard, lumpy bed, her thoughts were invariably turned to her native place. Why did she ever leave it? She recalled the purple hills, the springy heather, the clear, trickling streams, the little loch. She would be better there, she assured herself, dead and forgotten under the water-lilies, than alive and forgotten in this underground hole.

Mrs. Flynn's sitting and bed room, situated in what is called "a return," were exactly above the kitchen and scullery, and one night she was awoken by a strange noise below; the sound of steady footsteps. As she was by no means a nervous woman, she arose, quickly donned a flannel petticoat, took candle and poker, and crept downstairs. Half-way, on the turn, she descried a light in the kitchen. The door was open, and she became aware of a low moaning—a sort of stifled wail—the most melancholy, heartrending sound, that in a fairly long existence had ever met her ears. The wail came

from the lips of Johanna Daly—Johanna, with her black hair streaming far below her waist, and bare-foot, appeared as one distraught with sorrow. She was pacing the kitchen, from end to end, wringing her hands in a frenzy, and uttering this wild Irish lamentation.

Was the girl awake or asleep? was her mistress's first idea. Was she going out of her mind? Of course, she was silly—anyone could see that, that was in the house with her a week—a fool, and a fool who did not know her own value; but if she were to go raging mad, she would not be worth a pin as cook and housemaid. As Mrs. Flynn stole a few steps nearer, Johanna descried her, with a start, and halted in her walk. The eyes that met Mrs. Flynn's were perfectly sane—sane, but in them dwelt a spirit of hopeless despair.

"What in the name of fortune ails ye, me girl—what's the matter?" demanded her mistress abruptly.

"My heart is broke!" she answered in a hoarse voice.

"Augh, get out with your humbug!" remonstrated the little widow, "and go back to your bed like a reasonable Christian."

"I've been here six months," replied Johanna,

tossing back her great black mane, "and no sign or line from home. Maybe they are all dead."

"Oh, keep yer maybe's for honey, and talk sense, my good girl!"

"Then I will so, ma'am. I'd no call to leave home, but should have stuck it out. I think my father has put a curse on me—it's like enough. Give me what's owing to me to-morrow, and let me go. I can stop with Mary, provided she is alive, and I'll take service in the town."

"And so you were running away from home, the day I met you in the train?"

"I was so. I was running from Timmy Laffin, an old creature they wanted me to marry. I'll never marry him, but if I don't go back, I'll die. Oh, Mrs. Flynn," the girl's face and voice were impassioned, "I feel it *here*," and Johanna suddenly put her hands to her heart. She looked so ill, so haggard, and so forlorn, that Mrs. Flynn's armour-plated heart was touched, and she replied:

"Very well, my girl, you shall go home. You've worked finely for me, I will say, and I will make no offer to keep you. But you won't leave me in the lurch, Johanna, and the house half full; you will not go for a day or two, will you?"

"I will wait one week—no longer. Then you will pay me, and I will go home."

And with this mutual agreement the maid and mistress parted; the former creeping back to her room, accompanied by the vision of a passionate, black-haired, tragic figure, whom she could not bring herself to realise, was her everyday drudge, Johanna Daly.

* * * * *

"*What* do you think?" said Mrs. Flynn, as Lucy opened her shutters the following morning. "Johanna is off! I never expected to keep her so long, and now she is going."

"Going?" repeated her sister; "and for why?"

"She says she's heartbroke, and she looks awful bad—her face, the poor angashore, just wasted to nothing. I don't want her to *die* on me!"

"Oh, divil a fear she'll die. How bad she is!" sniffed Lucy.

"Well, then, she is. She has worked hard here—a pattern, I will say—up early and late, and no holidays or followers. The doorstep and knocker don't know themselves, nor the house and the kitchen. I've never seen such a worker. *Faix!* Lucy, she has

made a lady of *you*—you’ve no call to wet a finger—she’s giv’ you a nice easy time.”

“Augh! much you know! I’ve work and plenty; I’m killed with them stairs.”

“She’s a nice, soft creature,” continued her sister, “and has picked up a fine notion of cooking, and can make gravy and bread sauce as well as I do myself.”

“Oh, these ignorant girls is always workers. Sure, they’ve nothing in their heads to think about. When does she talk of leaving?”

“In a week—not a day longer.”

“Is that what she’s laid out? Well, don’t say nothing at all, but leave her to me, and maybe she will stop.”

“No; her mind is set. If you saw her last night, talking and walking and carrying on, quite out of herself, you’d know that, cute as you are, Lucy, it would take a cleverer wan than you, to keep Johanna here, doing her work, and *yours!*”

CHAPTER XVII

CUNNING Lucy offered no opinion on the tidings which were so unexpected and distasteful. She assisted Johanna to make the beds, she dusted indifferently whilst the other swept or scrubbed, and chattered of the awful cold, the Dublin dirt, and the price of her new boots—but all the time she was thinking hard. There was not much time to spare—only one week in which to carry out her scheme. She was firmly determined not to allow Johanna to return home, even if it cost her perjury, or a one-pound note. Two days after the announcement of Johanna's approaching departure, Lucy waited about until the "drawing-room" had gone out for the afternoon. Then she entered briskly with a duster (as an excuse in case of surprise), sat down at a davenport, opened a certain blotter, and hastily began to write a letter. She honestly deserved her sister's encomiums, being remarkably clever with her pen, and a rapid and ready writer. As soon as she had completed her task, she stamped and addressed the envelope, and took it out

and dropped it in the nearest pillar with her own hands.

Lucy was not an early bird. She loved her bed ; and Johanna had accomplished two hours' good work before her helpmate, with curling-pins in her scanty locks, would shuffle down, shivering and grumbling. But the day after she had despatched a certain letter, she was astir as punctually as Johanna. She wrenched herself out of her warm nest, with the mental promise that one day's early rising would save many—if she managed things properly. Johanna was washing the steps when the postman ran up with the letters. To her amazement, he held one towards her, saying :

“ Here, it's for you ! ”

“ For me ? ” she gasped.

“ Yes, if your name is Miss Johanna Daly.”

She rose slowly to her feet, as though in a dream, and took it ; and as she did so, grew white—she could hardly speak, but looked from the postman to the letter, and faltered, “ God bless you ! ” Then she turned to Lucy, who had seized the other letters, and was critically examining the writing and postmarks.

“ It's come ! ” she stammered. “ The letter ! ”

“ Oh, has it ? Well, then, signs on it, they did not hurry themselves. Would you like me to read it for you ? ”

"I would, av course," said Johanna tremulously, and she thrust the precious epistle into her hand.

Lucy preceded her into the back parlour, where she subsided on a chair, and tore it open; she looked hard at Johanna, who was standing over her, with a face working and quivering with emotion. Then she deliberately unfolded the sheet of paper, and began to read :—

"HEFFERNAN'S CROSS.

"DEAR JOHANNA,—I was real glad to hear you were in Dublin, and doing so well—a great deal better than if you were with me aunt, who has had the bailiffs in, and the small-pox. I would have written long ago, only I had a terribly sore hand—a whitlow on my finger. Your father is raging mad since you went off and left him, and Maggie is worse than a wild lion, so you had better stay quietly where you are for the present. All well here, no sickness to speak of, but the weather shocking bad. Last week I had a letter from Shamus McCarthy; he is getting on grand, and expects to be a general before he stops. He will be home in a couple of years, and he says you had better remain in Dublin, where he will go and fetch you the very day he lands. The cows and pigs, and the pup, up the lane are well. I hope you are also getting your health. Old Tim is still watching for you like a cat at a mousehole—he is just crazy after

you. If you will take my advice, you will stop when you are in a quiet, respectable family. No more at present, from your loving friend,

“MARY NOLAN.”

Johanna listened with a devout attention that was pathetic, whilst crafty Lucy read the false letter, she had so artfully composed and despatched. No suspicion of its good faith, ever flitted across the slavey's honest mind. As she stood motionless, reflecting on the news, Lucy rose suddenly and walked across the room, and tossed a crumpled envelope into the fire (a tell-tale envelope, which only bore the Dublin postmark!).

“Thanks be to God!” exclaimed Johanna, at last breaking silence. “Would you mind reading me the bit about Shamus over again, so that I might get it off?”

With this request Lucy good-naturedly complied, and then handed the epistle to its owner, saying :

“Your friends, Mary and Shamus, are a sensible couple. You had a right to take their advice, and stop here, instead of running mad home, where they will put you outside the door.”

“Well, maybe they know best,” admitted Johanna, as she took the letter and kissed it fervently ; “Mary

was always the clever wan! But this letter of hers has not got the right Kerry smell!—the air of the turf! I declare,” sniffing it, “it’s more like a lady’s writing-paper, and I get a queer remembrance of a violet flower.”

“I suppose someone gave Mary a packet of note-paper at Christmas,” suggested Lucy.

“That’s true; but when she wrote letters for me, it was in a heavy black hand, on thin paper she kept in an old candle-box—and you got a sort of notion of the tallow.”

“Oh, did you!” acquiesced the other; “and now, I suppose, you will be moving on to another situation? Herself is on the look-out for a new girl—unless you change your mind.”

“I suppose I ought to stop. What do you think, Lucy?”

“I think ye will go farther, and fare worse.”

“Then I’ll stay where I am, for the present. Now I must hurry off and get the breakfast,” and stuffing the precious letter into her dress, Johanna hastened downstairs.

* * * * *

“I’ve been talking to Johanna,” said Lucy to her sister, “and she’s going to stop on.”

"So you've coaxed her round!" cried Mrs. Flynn with genuine admiration. "Well, Lucy Cullen, wouldn't you beat the devil!"

"Not at all; it was a letter she got that eased her mind about her people. They don't want her at home, so she will just settle. But if I was you, I'd raise her wages, for Mrs. McNally, at No. 11, may be tempting her away."

"If she did, it would be just what I'd expect of that low, mean object," cried Mrs. Flynn with sudden animation—the mere name of her abhorred rival invariably roused her spirit—"I'm glad the girl will stop, and I'll raise her a pound—'twas clever of you to think of that; but I will always say this for you, Lucy; that if you are not much of a worker with your hands, your head, and your schemes, is wonderful."

CHAPTER XVIII

POOR deluded Johanna! Consoled by her false letter, and encouraged by the supposed advice of Shamus and Mary, she agreed to remain in her situation. What else, she asked herself, could she do—but work, and wait? Even if she were to return home, and find a place in the town of Annacotty, there would be a lot of ugly talk and persecution over Timmy. Shamus' wishes represented the most paramount authority to the hardworking drudge, and after her momentary revolt, she patiently resumed the yoke of bondage.

* * * * *

As a mark of approval, and a gracious reward for her reasonable conduct, Mrs. Flynn indulged Johanna with a holiday. Complacently resolved to show the creature something of "life," she conducted her—accompanied by the two children—to the Phoenix Park. Here she anticipated loud raptures from the stranger—but in Johanna's opinion, it was a poor

enough sort of place, in comparison to Kerry. To be perfectly frank, it soon appeared that what really *did* interest the girl, was soldiers! When three regiments marched by to manœuvre on "the fifteen acres," the manner in which her stolid "general," halted, stared, and admired, greatly scandalised Mrs. Flynn.

The lethargic country gawk became transformed into an animated creature. The stirring band, the officers' spirited chargers, the steady files of men, roused her to audible transports.

Her mistress was secretly horrified, and inwardly remarked, that if a red-coat was to hold up his finger the idiot would follow him to the world's end! How could she divine, that, for the sake of one far-away soldier, Johanna Daly thus beamed on two batteries of artillery and three battalions of the line!

After the troops had passed by, Mrs. Flynn conducted her little party to the scene of the Phoenix Park murders, and here the country girl again disconcerted her employer by suddenly flopping on her knees close to the fatal spot, and, indifferent to the gaze of curious passers-by, repeating her prayers as fervently as if she were in her own kitchen! Mrs. Flynn now bitterly regretted that she had not left her there! The Zoo was visited, and filled the

simple Johanna with mingled feelings of terror and delight. The delight preponderated, for Johanna was fond of animals. She cast pitiful eyes on the creatures, caged and imprisoned, far from their own country, and experienced a curious feeling of sympathy for the ever-restless puma, the ever-restless Polar bear, and the melancholy lion. As the sight-seers stood before an empty cage, and heard that the late inmate—a kangaroo—had died that morning, “just pined away of a broken heart,” she felt an extraordinary lump rising in her throat, and a queer burning sensation in her eyelids.

Was she going mad? she asked herself, that she was ready to burst out crying for a wild beast that she had never seen!

Taking it all in all, the expedition was (in the opinion of Mrs. Flynn) a success. She had opened the eyes of her ignorant maidservant, and shown her a little glimpse of life—the girl had seen a regiment, a four-in-hand coach, a polo match, and various wild beasts. A few more such excursions, and Johanna would become like the rest of the world, and not given to doing and saying such unearthly, unexpected things.

The next attempt at educating Johanna took the form of a visit to the circus. It was an evening

entertainment, and the same little party proceeded to the place by tram. As they were early they obtained a position in the shilling seats, where they enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the entrance to the ring, and the pungent stable smell, with the bog mould in the arena, carried happy memories to rustic Johanna! The children were seated between her and their mother, scuffling and sucking peppermints, in a seventh heaven of bliss. Johanna herself was in a condition of mental exaltation, and was wearing a hat for the first time ("a sailor," with a red ribbon—the gift of her mistress, price eighteen-pence). It was startlingly becoming. The lively music, the lively crowd, the novel occasion, stirred the girl's spirits, and brought a brilliant colour to her face, and brightness to her eye, and many an eye was riveted on Mrs. Flynn's handsome companion. Mrs. Flynn was uncomfortably conscious of the fact. The girl was "too remarkable," and again she most heartily wished, that she had left her at home.

The performance began with acrobats, and the trapeze. Johanna was alternately thrilled and terrified; she gaped with admiration, yet she trembled for their lives; then came funny clowns, dancing dogs, and performing mules. When the elephants bundled

in, and formed up so close to her that she could have touched them, Johanna became rather white; but so far it was all wonderful—most wonderful, and beautiful. Naturally, it surpassed anything the Kerry girl had ever seen, and every now and again Mrs. Flynn would lean over, and nudge her and say, “Doesn’t that open yer eyes, me girl?” to which the girl invariably returned an awed assent.

At length a splendid gentleman in a gorgeous blue and gold coat, cracking a long whip, entered the ring, and grooms in red livery stood up on the front of the lower seats, holding aloft large paper hoops. The band played a merry tune, a woman ran into the arena, and dropped curtseys—and Johanna dropped her jaw.

The artiste, Mademoiselle “Too Too,” wore a low body, without sleeves, her extremities were bare (no, no, Johanna, those were pink silk tights), her skirts were brief and fluffy. She pirouetted, and kissed her hands, then leapt on the broad back of a white horse, and proceeded to execute a series of remarkable capers, as he cantered round the ring.

“Too Too” was a noted equestrienne, but altogether *Too* much for the uneducated eye of Johanna Daly, whose face became scarlet, as she rose from her seat with a sort of plunge.

"What's the matter with ye, girl?" asked her mistress, in a querulous whisper.

"Will ye let me out of this!" she answered breathlessly. "I never was used to seeing these sort of people—women stripped naked, dancing on horseback!"

"Arrah, will ye shut your mouth!" hissed Mrs. Flynn; "everyone will hear you. Sit down, can't ye, and not make a show of yourself."

"It isn't me that's making a show of meself!" argued the girl, with a blazing face, speaking in a loud excited voice, "I'll go, av ye plase. Look at that wan!" indicating Mademoiselle "Too Too" with a jerk of her head; "she hasn't a tack on her! Why doesn't the gentleman with the whip give her a skelp av it and turn her out?"

Johanna's face and gestures needed no interpretation to her neighbours. She was remonstrating with her companion, in a full, far-reaching key.

The country girl who was scandalised, and made no secret of the fact, attracted general notice. People were laughing on all sides. Johanna "held the stage," and the delight which her audience manifested threw "Too Too's" great hoop trick entirely into the shade. Mrs. Flynn was both furious and mortified. Here was a pretty disturbance, and she in

the middle of it! Everyone in their vicinity was looking and grinning, those afar off were crying "Hush-sh-sh"; an important official had requested her to "take her lunatic home." She arose in wrath, thrust the lunatic out before her, giving her as she went a couple of hard blows. For a time Mrs. Flynn was too angry to articulate, but as they walked to the tram terminus she found her breath and her tongue, and poured forth torrents of abuse on the culprit, who maintained a stoical silence.

In the tram she nagged at intervals (across the bodies of two strangers), and as she stood in her own hall she finally announced :

"Now, see here, my girl, I'll never take you to nothing no more—to be shamed and scandalised before the whole of Dublin! What on the living earth do ye mean, by objecting to a decent creature, and a splendid rider, earning her bread?"

"She's not decent!" cried Johanna, passionately, turning at last like the proverbial worm. "I may be only a country girl, and God knows I'm ignorant; but I can tell a naked woman when I see her. What would ye call *me* if I went out in a big crowd without a stitch on me, but a pair of stays and a frill, and kissed my hand to every man I saw? I declare now"—breathing hard—"if the women at home

came across the likes of her, they'd run her into the sea."

"Ah, ye don't know what ye are talking of. Sure ye can't even spake English—and never had a hat on ye till to-night! 'Twas only the other day ye saw gas and coal, much less lions and elephants! 'Tis all the thanks I get for trying to educate ye."

"Well, ma'am, I'm sure ye mane well, but I have me own thoughts."

"Do you want to set your opinion against mine, you great lump!" cried her mistress. "Go off down to your kitchen, and hold your tongue."

"I'll go down to my kitchen—but regarding that wicked creature, I will *not* hold my tongue," retorted the girl. "She was most ondacent." As she spoke she began to descend the stairs.

"Hold your tongue!" screeched Mrs. Flynn. "Do you hear me? Hold your tongue!"

But from the depths, ascended the voice of rebellious Johanna, calling back with shrill defiance:

"She was *not* dacent. I'll never giv' in to that," and with the word (and the last word) "*naked*," the kitchen door was slammed.

CHAPTER XIX

IN spite of this difference of opinion, Mrs. Flynn and Johanna made peace. The former was too sensible of the girl's value to quarrel with her over the length of a circus rider's skirts, and the latter settled down to her daily round and common task, little suspecting that her mistress secretly looked upon her as a treasure, that she was the envy of every housewife on the terrace, and invariably held up to servants as their model and brilliant example.

A girl who never asked for a day out—had no followers—a girl who was clean as a new pin, honest as the sun, quiet as a lamb, and who did her own washing! Such a treasure-trove was rare, if not priceless! Many an envious woman came and peeped over the railings in front of the kitchen window, in order to get a sight of this gem!

Meanwhile, her employer lolled at her ease in her snug little parlour, making out accounts, drinking tea, or reading Lucy's novelettes, cheered by the

delightful conviction that her housework was being most efficiently accomplished, and that among her neighbours she was the cause of terrible heart-burnings and bitter jealousy. But this complacent lady never learned that Johanna—the excellent and the envied—was the means of her losing two lucrative permanent lodgers. Thereby hangs a tale, or, to speak correctly, two tales, the particulars of which will be divulged in their proper place.

Of exercise Johanna enjoyed enough and to spare, but of air the supply was somewhat limited, and now and then, when her work was done, she would emerge from the lower regions, and stand at the top of the area steps, in order to become cool. The tall, motionless figure, attracted a certain amount of attention and interest. Other servants stole out to have a word with the Kerry girl; but she proved to be unapproachable—and in this respect evidently resembled her late mother, Johanna O'Hara from beyond the Shannon. The slavey from No. 11 accosted her, with gushing effusion. She was a sallow, toothless creature, wearing a very dirty cap, and a smile that divided her face into two equal parts.

“Well, I declare, it's a sight for sore eyes, to see you out—barrin' the pillar or the grocers.”

Johanna merely gazed and nodded gravely.

"She's a terror, your wan, the worst of the lot. I wonder ye stay. Sure, hadn't she eighteen girls in three months. Tell me how in the world do ye stand her?"

To which question, the Kerry girl gave simple and surprising reply :

"I have no English."

"Augh, ye are joking now, and you are there six months," expostulated her disgusted interviewer.

Johanna nodded assent.

"And that trapesing piece, Lucy Cullen, is your comrade. Oh! she's a nice one, with her pawnshops and her finery—and her *behaviour!*" (a grin of diabolical significance). "I could tell ye a fine story about her—and a plumber."

Once more Johanna protested, "I have no English" (which was not strictly true), and presently turned about, and went deliberately down the steps.

The other stared, and opened her mouth in astonishment. This great, big country omadhaun was quite grand in herself! and would not speak, or make no freedom. Maybe she was queer in her head? Yes, that was it, for what sane servant could resist a good gossip? The young woman was "not all there"—

and this piece of news soon ran like wildfire along the Terrace, and relieved many envious minds. "Sure," as they said to each other, "they might have known that no one but a born fool would remain at No. 9."

Whenever Mrs. Flynn found herself "To let," that is to say, her house "empty," she was in an irritable and lachrymose condition. If the drawing-rooms were unoccupied, she talked of "ruin" and "the poor house," although she had a solid sum at her banker's, and a good many shares in Boland's Bakery. Moreover, if No. 11 was doing a brisk business and she was not, her dependants had a sore time—to see a cab laden with luggage arrive next door but one pierced her to the heart! However, during the early summer there was no occasion for Mrs. Flynn to suffer pangs from the gnawing tooth of jealousy. The sun of prosperity was beaming on her house, which was full from basement to roof. To begin to enumerate the inmates with due formality. In the kitchen there was Johanna and the cat; on the entrance floor were Mrs. Flynn's own apartments, a sitting and bed room, occupied by herself and children—rather dark and stuffy, but much to her liking. There she made out bills, and did a certain amount

of special cooking, worked, and ate, and "pigged." The dining-rooms were occupied by Miss Fergus, who was permanent, and paid twenty-one shillings a week for her board and attendance. She was a solitary old lady, with near-sighted eyes, and a remarkable display of wrinkles, who, with a small annuity, and a few family heirlooms, had hidden herself in her old age in this ugly, mean lodging. Sally Fergus was the very last representative of an ancient Irish house—their star had risen with Strongbow, burnt steadily for centuries, and now, in the person of this shrunken, aged woman, was on the point of disappearing below the horizon. In her far-distant girlhood, the glories of her race had become a little dimmed, but her parents still kept open house—her father hunted the hounds, her mother gave balls, and entertained the Viceroy, the servants burnt wax candles in the kitchen (which was a proverb, and providence, to half the county, and to all tramps). When Sally was seventeen a sudden turn occurred in the fortunes of Sir Thomond Fergus—a turn for the worse. The light of the house began to wane; fore-closed mortgages, rotten securities, madly extravagant sons, hastened the end. From the great family place to the Dower House, from the Dower House to a

house in Dublin, from the house in Dublin to lodgings, were all so many steps in the descending scale. Miss Fergus had but one visitor, and rarely received a letter, indeed most of her former acquaintances believed her to be dead. She was eighty years of age, frail, poor, and of no account in this world—such are easily forgotten. She had had her romance—she had nursed her mother through a protracted illness, an illness that lasted for years, and changed her from a young, to an elderly woman. Her relatives had dissipated the last remnants of the family estates, including her small fortune, and then died, leaving her to subsist on an annuity, and drag out the remainder of her days, alone. And here at No. 9 she dwelt, patiently waiting for her summons. A good fire, a cup of tea, and a poached egg supplied her modest wants. She was a gentle, sweet-tempered old woman, who always thought well of her fellow-creatures, never uttered a sharp word, and, notwithstanding her poverty, was lavishly charitable. More than one beggar had been startled to receive half a crown from such a shabby benefactress. Mrs. Flynn invariably spoke of Miss Fergus as “a real lady,” and in moments of extreme expansion, went so far as to admit that she “made” on the dining-room—who did

er own dusting, paid to the hour, and ate no more than would feed a sparrow. Miss Fergus rose early, dressed herself carefully, with a little assistance, in her ancient black silk, checked shawl, and white-and-blue cap.—Blue had been her colour.—Then she read the Psalms and Lessons for the day. The morning paper was her one excitement. After she had finished this, she watered and tended two venerable plants, her boast and pride, then she sat in the window and watched the passers-by. In the evening she played patience (and was exceedingly particular to have clean and thick cards) until bedtime struck. Her chief companion was the kitchen cat, a lean grey-and-white creature, with a singed coat. When at home, he shared his society impartially between Miss Fergus and Johanna. He was a grateful and generous beast on several occasions he had brought the old lady a nice plump mouse—and he represented a bond of union between the kitchen and the dining-room. For these three—the two women and the ugly common cat—were sincere, if secret, friends.

The drawing-rooms—Lucy's especial care—were splendid, with a full suite of saddle-back (third hand), large spotted mirror, a rickety davenport, and some extraordinary prints and oleographs. Whenever on

rare occasions, Johanna's mind was directed to the King's Palace, her thoughts flew to this gorgeous apartment. There were green rep curtains, a red carpet, and gilt clock (invariably slow). All these luxuries were at present enjoyed by a Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Driscoll, who had recently arrived from America.

Eugene was a fine, strapping young fellow, of six-and-twenty, with round black eyes, a fresh complexion, and a fine moustache. He was a great man for dress, and conversation, and to see him sallying forth of an afternoon in a well-cut suit, a brown hat, patent leather boots, and cane, was a spectacle which filled the whole Terrace with complacency. He was a credit to the neighbourhood.

And what of Mrs. Eugene Driscoll? She would never see fifty again—so the womenfolk declared—though her hair was bright yellow, and her waist was pinched. She was the rich widow of a man who had made a fortune in sausages (of what material history did not relate) out West, and who had *en route* to England to enjoy his well-gotten wealth, encountered Eugene—a handsome, smiling, ingratiating ne'er-do-well. Eugene had gone out to the States in order to make his fortune. Fortune came to him in the

shape of Mrs. Dawson, and he received her with open arms. Her relations in Ireland (who had prepared an enthusiastic welcome for their wealthy and middle-aged aunt) received her but coldly when she presented herself, and her second husband, and Mrs. Driscoll was sulking in Dublin in order to signify that "she was above their malice," and also to carry out some intricate law business. In spite of her yellow hair and small waist, diamond earrings, and sealskin coat, Mrs. Driscoll was of common clay, a hard, pushing business woman, with a hot temper and a rasping tongue. In a weak moment she had been attracted by handsome "Genie" (as his people called him), and for once in her life had effected a bad bargain! But she was foolishly fond of the gay, good-looking, wheedling scamp—extravagantly proud of her husband, and, as she kept all her money in her own hands, he was naturally her devoted slave. His tyrant was generous, but jealous. He never ventured to praise another woman, and she rarely allowed him out of her sight. As soon as her business was arranged, she was going back to America. Meanwhile, the Driscolls were "good" lodgers. That is to say, they lived well on fish, flesh, fowl, puddings, and pastry; and asked no awkward questions respecting

eggs and butter, or the sinking spirits of the decanter. Everything was entered in the bill, which was settled handsomely, once a week, by Mrs. Driscoll herself. The happy couple went out on cars for long excursions. Of a night they visited the theatre, and occasionally dined in town. These were Lucy's opportunities for trying on Mrs. Driscoll's toques and boas, reading her letters (other people's correspondence had an extraordinary attraction for her), and investigating the resources of the cellarette.

So much for the drawing-room. We have been a long time *en route*, but are gradually ascending to the top of the house. Here we find Lucy's own bower—a scene of dishevelled finery—the door hooks covered with dresses and skirts, the drawers half out, the bed unmade for days. Two other rooms are occupied by lodgers. Mr. Nixey, a “permanent,” had the top front. He was an old bachelor, a solicitor's clerk living on his pension—neat, punctual, and precise. He paid eight shillings a week for his apartment, with the privilege of shaving-water, and the right to sit at the kitchen fire on winter's nights, where he read the evening paper. In summer-time, Mr. Nixey was rarely to be seen in the kitchen; but, when the days closed in, he descended at six o'clock, and remained

till ten, spectacles on nose, feet on fender, installed in the sole armchair. Here he read aloud the news in a sonorous key, conscientiously noting all his stops, and raising and lowering his tone, according to the best rules of elocution. Even if his sole audience was represented by the cat, he still read aloud, for he liked the sound of his own voice, and declared that it impressed facts on his memory. Mr. Nixey was particularly fond of the horrible, and gloated over accidents, hangings, murders, and manglings. Law cases naturally arrested his attention. It was common gossip (common to the Terrace) that "old Nick" would like to "hang up his hat" and marry the widow, his landlady! But that prudent creature had instituted inquiries, and discovered that his income died with him, and although she referred to him when quarrels ran high (and on one or two occasions, when she was threatened with a summons for libel), yet as a rule she kept him sternly in his place, which was the top back, and the front kitchen.

The remaining lodger was the cherished friend of Joe Whelan—the David to his Jonathan—and had secured his quarters (and credit) through the influence of Lucy Cullen. He was but rarely seen, being a man who kept late hours, and was entrusted with a

latch-key—thanks again to Lucy. His name was Sam Sheedy (Slashing Sam), his age twenty-nine, his antecedents unknown.

In appearance, he was short and spare—quite painfully thin; his hair was close-cropped, his eyes very small, black, and shifty (two currants in a plum duff, according to facetious Joe); but his ears compensated for the deficit, their size being abnormal. They were not merely large, but pointed, and stood out aggressively on either side of his head! Mephistopheles in gaiters and a covert coat! Somehow he contrived to recall a jockey out of employment! Moreover, he was deeply interested, profoundly interested, in races and betting.

According to his own story, Mr. Sheedy had been absent for years from his native land on account of his health, but where he had enjoyed change of scene and air was not disclosed. He appeared to be fairly prosperous, although his rent was in arrears, and was on boisterous flirting terms with Lucy, who called him "Sammy."

The inmates of No. 9, having been introduced in detail, it now remains to be seen how they affected our friend Johanna.

CHAPTER XX

EUGENE DRISCOLL'S eye was an active optic, and one morning, in passing through the hall, he caught a glimpse of Johanna, and at once accosted her.

"Hullo, my beauty, where do you come from?"

"From the kitchen, sir, if you please."

"Well, then, since you ask me, I don't please. I'd sooner"—staring hard—"have you above stairs, and that other scarecrow below. There'd be more whisky and less chat! What do they call you?"

"The—cook." And with this unsatisfactory explanation, the hitherto inconspicuous beauty disappeared into the depths of the lower regions.

"To think of such a stunning girl being in Mrs. Flynn's kitchen!" mentally exclaimed her astonished lodger. But he kept his thoughts and his discovery to himself, merely throwing out one or two cautious questions to Lucy, who for special reasons of her own—not unconnected with "tips"—vouchsafed but

barren information. He gathered that the cook was from Kerry—and *mad*.

Nevertheless, nothing daunted, he made his way downstairs one morning, ostensibly to have his boots blacked. Johanna was busy, but he had a wheedling tongue. He talked to her of Kerry, and she turned about, and faced him. What a face it was! Young, good, gloriously handsome. Subsequently Mr. Driscoll made several errands below—he wanted to smoke a pipe—he wanted to open an ink-bottle—he wanted to see the cat. Any excuse was sufficient, and the more he saw of this splendid fine girl, of course the more he admired her.

What eyes and teeth and figure! What a head of hair! He wisely stuck to "Kerry," and generalities. From compliments she shrank—yes, and presents. He offered her a sovereign to buy herself a hat; but she declined it briefly—"I never take what I don't earn."

"Ye can earn that easy, me darlin'!" Johanna looked at him mutely.

"And how?" she asked, in simple amazement.

"By giving *me* a kiss!"

"'Tis joking ye are, sir; but I don't like them jokes," and she pushed the money towards him across the table.

"Johanna, me girl, you're enough to drive a fellow crazy. How many lovers have you?"

"Go up and mind your old wife, that's lying sick with the bronchitis, and that I'm making this poultice for, and don't talk foolishness," was the rude rejoinder

Eventually Mr. Driscoll made his peace, for he was well experienced in the ways of womenkind, and whilst his elderly spouse was wheezing upstairs he undertook various errands to save Lucy. In these his wife acquiesced—for she had never seen Johanna.

One evening Mrs. Driscoll was better, and sitting up. Lucy was out, so was Mrs. Flynn; and Driscoll, who had had a dull day, and a certain amount of whisky, came downstairs, and discovered Johanna alone. She was sewing. He sat down and talked, smoked, and stared, whilst she listened indifferently. At last she stood up, and went over to the fire to put on a kettle.

"It's a lady you ought to be, Johanna, riding in your carriage," he remarked, abruptly.

Johanna turned on him a face suddenly softened; the colour came into her cheeks. Wasn't Shamus going to make an officer's lady of her? Not that she was wanting to be the likes of them. Driscoll noticed her expression, and, unfortunately for himself, misconstrued its cause.

"Johanna," he said, standing up suddenly, "there is no use in your holding back, or being so prim. You know very well that I love you," and before the astonished Johanna was aware he had seized her in his arms, and kissed her repeatedly. Taken totally aback, she was momentarily paralysed and helpless. Then she realised the indignity, the outrage—she, who was promised to Shamus, to be kissed and dragged about by a married man! Johanna was a strong girl, and not only freed herself, but dealt Driscoll such a blow, that he staggered and fell, and hit his head against the kitchen fender. Instantly he sprang up, furious and bleeding.

"You infernal wild cat!" he cried, hoarsely.

"I'll be two wild cats in a minute, if you don't go out of this," and she raised the tongs in a threatening manner.

"Stop," he cried, sobering, "how am I to go up to old Judy and show her this? Hold on, and be sensible. Let me bathe my head."

"Out you go!"

"I won't—I can't face her all cut! What the devil can I say has happened? What's a kiss, Johanna, and you half kill me?"

"Tell her you hugged and kissed Johanna Daly, and that's what you got fer your pains. And I'll tell

you more," she added, white, and shaking with fury, "either you, or I go. I declare to ye on the vartue of me oath I'll walk up to-morrow morning, and tell your wife the sort of husband she has, and how it was I that marked you! Here's the door, out you go!"

Johanna, tongs in hand, held it wide open, whilst the discomfited and bleeding Lothario groped his way upstairs.

"Only think," exclaimed Lucy, as she came running down after the drawing-room breakfast, "them Driscolls are off to-morrow, paying the full week. He fell over the scraper last night in the dark, and you never saw such a face as he has on him—one eye closed, and his nose the size of a loaf of bread!"

"Is that so?" remarked Johanna, sedately.

"Yes, herself is awfully put about, losing two such good tenants. Still, she can't keep them, when they want to leave. He is awful eager to be off, and I've my own notion."

"And what is that like?"

"He is a bold sort of a barbarian, and I suspicion he was making too free with some chap's girl, and he gave him a lathering, and he's afraid someone will tell *her*. Oh, but he is awfully sweet to her this morning! and she to him—'her poor, darling, duckey boy—and *did* he fall over the nasty scraper?'"

The Driscolls departed with considerable bustle, commotion, and fuss, loud thumping of boxes, and screaming of orders; and poor Mrs. Flynn little dreamt, as she herself shut the cab door, and walked disconsolate up the steps, that it was the kitchen, that had driven out the drawing-room!

CHAPTER XXI

AUGUST came, bringing with it all the glories and hurly-burly of the notable "Horse Show Week," and when that great event was over, people once more deserted Dublin, and escaped to the country and seaside.

The city was dusty, hot, and airless, and many an evening Johanna emerged from her den, stood at the gate, and gasped for a breath of the cool mountain breeze and the sound of splashing streams. September gave way to October, and the leaves in the squares began to fall, the shutters of big houses to be opened, the shops displayed the autumn novelties, and the evenings closed in, and once more brought Mr. Nixey and his paper to the kitchen fire. Johanna did not give much attention to his readings. She was generally engaged in putting Miss Fergus to bed, and "washing-up" in the scullery.

"Johanna, your chap is no more in the Indies than you are! he is in the war," was a bombshell cast at her feet by Lucy Cullen.

"What war?" she faltered.

"Arrah, but you are the queer foolish ignoramus! Haven't ye heard of the war in South Africa—agin the Boers?"

"I heard people talking of Boers in South Africa, but I thought they were some sort of wild animal."

"Ah, go on wid you! Sure, haven't all the papers been full of it this two months, and all troops going out there in boats?"

"Maybe so; but sure, you know, I can't read, and I never see a paper except to light a fire. Tell me about the war—where is it, Lucy, alannah?"

"In South Africa—two armies fighting—the Boer people and our men striving their big best to kill one another over some gold and diamond mines, as well as I can make out."

"But you don't think the Donnybrooks are there?"

"If they are *there*, they are in the thick of it, I'll go bail!"

Johanna's face grew livid, her eyes became black. She looked so completely shaken that Lucy was alarmed, and said:

"Oh, my woman, sure I'm only joking! There's two regiments of Donnybrooks. Battalions, they call them. Your fellow's is in India. If you want to hear what is going on, why don't you come and sit in

the front kitchen and listen to old Nixey reading out the news, instead of rattling plates; it's a sort of an education."

Education—magic word!

From this time forward, Johanna arrived with her knitting, and sat and listened eagerly to the day's news. She learnt a good deal, for the reading was plain and distinct. She heard all the war intelligence, the sad and terrible incidents of December, but she never once caught a word of A Company of the 1st Battalion Donnybrooks, much less of a certain Corporal James McCarthy. Did she but know it, there were recent tidings of him down in Kerry, where his brother Dan had received two long letters from Shamus himself. (These we annex and publish.) If Johanna could only have heard these read aloud! "If!" But of all McCarthy's many well-wishers, his faithful sweetheart was the only one who was left in ignorance of their arrival, and contents.

CHAPTER XXII

"FIELD HOSPITAL, CHIEVELEY,

"January 2nd.

"MY DEAR DAN,—I hope this finds you well, as it leaves me. I am stretched on the broad of my back writing to you, with a leg all morticed up in wood and plaster—nothing to signify, but it will be a good while before I could lep Brennan's boundary. I only sent you a few lines from Ladysmith, as I had no time. But now I've enough time to fill a newspaper, and I'll try and tell you something about the war, though I expect ye hear more of the real business at the Cross, than we do, that's in the thick of it.

"It was on a Sunday evening, the 19th of September, and we were all bathing in the Klip River, when we got an hour's notice to shift to Dundee—about fifty miles off—and away we went in cattle trucks, but we were brought back double quick to Ladysmith, not being required. However, it wasn't long before we were sent off again in a mortal hurry. The Boers were coming through the passes and over

the border, and work was beginning in earnest. We were in camp in Glencoe, along with a lot of the Fusiliers and Rifles, cavalry and artillery, and it was on the morning of the 20th of October that the first shot was fired, and the first thing killed in the war was an artillery horse. They were down by the river being watered. It was barely light, and we were just after parade, and rolling up our great coats, when—whizz—bang—crash—and all of a sudden the shells began to drop among us. Being in the tents, the canvas knocked about, and clods and earth flying, the men, never having been under fire, were a bit unsteady, but as soon as the officers came among them they were all right. By five o'clock every mother's son was under arms, and only craving to see the Boers.

"There was three columns moving over the Drakensburg, and there was thousands of them on Talana Hill. We were soon marching to the attack. Our artillery kept pegging away whilst we doubled to a place called Smith's farm, losing four men as we went. The firing was awful hot, our own guns shell-ing over us, cavalry galloping, and the civilians cheering. Talana Hill was steep, covered with great big stones, and half-way up there was a high wall. 'Twas there we lost a lot of men and officers, and the officer commanding, the dead lying just in heaps, and the fire was really terrible. Howsomever we were

going to take that hill at all costs—it was nigh as steep as the side of a house, and the Boers had actually to stand up to fire on us as we crawled along on our hands and knees, for more than a mile, the men larking and joking all the time, and the officers having the devil's work to keep them under cover, as they were wanting to see what was going on!

“After some hours' climbing, and heavy fighting, firing by sections, and taking what cover we could, we made a charge with fixed bayonets and stormed the crest. When the Boers saw the steel, and heard the boys cheering and yelling, they just turned about and ran like hares. And didn't I think it was all over! There was the enemy's camp and transport, and nice new guns lying just below the back of the hill—a splendid fine haul, and our own artillery in elegant position—when the Boers ran up a white flag and our guns never fired a shot.

“So all our nine hours' desperate fighting went for nothing, the Boers' camp and transport just moved off under our very noses without a single scratch. I tell you, I could have lain down and roared with rage. As long as we were being shot like driven grouse getting it hot, no matter, but as soon as our turn come, a turn we'd been climbing and sweating and dying for, they ran up a rag, and it's all over. We daren't lay a finger on them or a thing belonging to them. A Boer man came and took a horse that

was within two yards of me, and got on his back and rode away. Bad scan to that flag! When I thought of the heaps of our killed and wounded, lying out there on the side of the hill, in the wet and the mud, and them chaps clearing off so comfortable with their waggons, and stores, and guns, I just felt mad. Going down Talana was easier than coming up, I can tell ye, Danny, but our companies were shocking thin.

“That same night, in the canteen, there was great going round among the boys, shaking hands and congratulating one another. Begad! we thought the war was over, for the Boers had lost heavy.

“In the next two or three days we were shifted about. There was a thick wet fog, and most of the time we were working like divils, throwing up earth-works. No one knew what we were to be at, or where we were to go next!

“At last we got the route and were off, leaving Dundee standing—camp, stores, and our hospital and wounded—for we could not hold the place and were falling back on Ladysmith. And that was the march! My God! will I ever forget it? On Sunday night we lit up our lines with candles, to deceive the enemy, and at twelve o'clock we stole away by the Helpmakaar Road, a column two miles long—the transport and ox-waggons in front, ourselves the rear-guard. It was streaming with rain all the time. On

Monday evening we went through "Van Tenden's" pass, in the Biggarsberg, narrow as a cat's walk, and black as a coal—five hours' steady going without a word, or a smoke, for if the Boers had caught us there, we were done.

"On Wednesday we reached Sunday River—the rain all the time coming down in streams, and the mud and slush just awful—the chaps marching, as it were, in their sleep, for we dare not halt for long, and when we did, they leant up against the nearest rock, and slept sound standing, just dead wore out. On Thursday morning we were in Ladysmith, such a force as never was seen—ragged and dirty, and hard set to crawl into camp. But we had got through, without losing man or beast, though there was a big Boer commando on our rear.

"We had a bit of a rest, and a clean up, and glory be, were out of Ladysmith before the siege. I was nearly forgetting to tell you that I was reinstated corporal on board ship for being, so the chaps said, such an elegant sailor, and I was promoted sergeant the evening after we stormed Talana Hill, for we had lost a power of "non-coms" that day, and I was given the stripes of poor Pat Connor. You know him—he came from Dingle—he had the half of his head blown off by a shell, and him within a yard of me! Those shells is awful, and makes a lot of mess and horrors, and the screeching they give coming

along is enough to freeze yer bones. Danny, me boy, 'tis one thing to read of war on the paper, as ye sit at your ease at home, 'tis another thing to see it—to be living with it cheek by jowl. 'Tis all a sort of hurry and waiting, and shooting and scheming, and marching and dust, mixed up with dead horses and stretchers. But it suits me well enough, for in my opinion, the finest place a man was ever in, is the first firing line.

“From Ladysmith we went to Estcourt, a little village of tin houses, surrounded with hills—kopjes they call them. We were here with two regiments, and some artillery and light horse, waiting for the Army Corps that was coming to relieve Ladysmith. On a clear day, when the wind was north, ye could hear the big guns there pounding away. And we were not idle either, but had a good bit of work on armoured trains going up and down the line feeling our way. I was in the armoured train near Chieveley—you'll have read of it, no doubt, in the paper—when the Boers trapped us and capsized the engine. They had a Maxim gun that knocked us about greatly. We lost a lot of men, but we got the train righted and away, after some hot fighting. Then we were at a place called Grobler's Kloof—waiting—never knowing when we were going into action. Early in the morning, our officers did not fall us in, but would give us a sort of lecture outside the tent.

Our captain was a smart soldier, a very venturesome young officer, and a great chap for looking for guns. As I tell you, we never knew when there was going to be a battle, but very early one morning he says, 'Now, boys, the scouts are in; we march in ten minutes. Don't forget to keep up the name ye have earned.' The orderly tells me I've used up every bit of the blessed writing paper in this hospital, so I am done. Next letter I write, I'll tell you about the battle of Colenso.

"Remember me to all friends.

"Your affectionate brother,

"SHAMUS MCCARTHY.

"*Private.*—Don't read this out. Ye might let the O'Connors think it was enteric that killed Paddy. I suppose there's no word since of Johanna Daly? The officers say I'm too venturesome—but 'tis only *her* that ails me. When I think of Johanna I'd as soon be dead as not. I've made my will, and put you in it, Danny; and if you had me *insured*, you might get a good bit of money.

"S. M."

CHAPTER XXIII

"FIELD HOSPITAL,

"CHIEVELEY, NATAL.

"DEAR DAN,—I've indented on the sister for notepaper, and here I am writing again, as I promised, and take up my pen to tell you about the battle of Colenso. It's better for me to be talking to you, than to be lying with my hands beside me, and my eyes stuck on the ceiling—*thinking*. Colenso was the place where we first come on the Boers in force. We were one side of the river, and they were in thousands the other—high up in holes and trenches in the bank unbeknownnd to us, and well armed with guns and Mauser rifles. Ye could not see a speck of them—the place was as quiet and innocent as the side of a Kerry hill, and we never suspicioned there was a living creature on it, and were marching and doubling all over the plain, and down to the riverside. But when the 14th and 60th Batteries galloped into action and took up a position,

and blazed away—*that* drew the fire. Oh, Holy Peter! the air was stiff with bullets, and not one Boer could we see—we were just there to be shot down, whilst they were picnicking up in their trenches. They tell me there were women there—some handling rifles, some with mother-of-pearl spy-glasses and ham sandwiches. Everything had been made ready.

“The bullets seemed to come from all directions, and the dust they knocked up itself was a wonder. The shrapnel was flying and the pom-poms rapping, but all the same our brigade—’twas Hart’s Division—made for the river. We were to wade the Tugela, and storm the other bank. We drove the Dutch to the north side, and plunged in, never thinking but that the water was knee deep. But we soon found that we were had *again*. There were holes ten foot, and under water were fencings that tripped up, and drowned the chaps. Weighted down with his boots and his accoutrements, many a poor fellow found the last thing he expected, and that was a watery grave! I was sucked under, but I’m a strong swimmer, and I managed to land on the far side. All I wanted was to get to handy grips with the Boers. But it was no manner of use. We were only a company, and we had to get back, splashing and swimming for the dear life, the bullets hopping round us. It was terrible

rough work in that Tugela river. I hauled out two chaps myself, just as they were going under. The worst thing of all was being ordered to retire, and never getting a chance with the bayonet, or even of seeing the Boers. That's what broke our hearts. And such confusion never was known—regiments all mixed up anyhow. I was with two strange privates taking cover by the river, and I saw the awful work with the two batteries, and the men striving to save the guns, and them and the horses knocked over every time—it was a cruel sight. Then there were wounded all around us. I crawled down to the river to get some water for a dying man, and as I was giving it to him, I felt a heavy blow on the leg, the same as if someone had kicked me. Then I saw the blood spouting, and knew I was hit. I got out my field bandage, and made as good a job of myself as I could. We carry a bandage in one corner of our coat, and what they call a 'description card' in the other, so that if you are dead they have your name and number. Well, the retire was sounded at twelve o'clock, and I made a great shift to get home, and hopped along on one leg. The ground was covered with ant heaps, with white marks on them, and round about lay heaps of dead and dying who had taken cover, and were just marked off—them Boers having

the range exact. I kept in the open though the explosive bullets were cracking all around me, and hopped and hopped, and rested and hopped, a matter of five hundred yards, till I reached the Field Hospital, where I was taken in and minded. It was a shocking sight, that same hospital. There were the doctors, working in their shirt-sleeves, operating and stitching and setting. One tent was just stacked full of dead. Oh, we got it hard that day! The next morning I was sent down in an ambulance waggon to Chieveley, where I am still. We were a big crowd, and one chap who sat up beside the driver had a great nerve, and eleven wounds, no less, and him cracking jokes all the time. I need not tell you that he was a Donnybrook—but I'm sorry to say he has committed himself here in hospital. I was not too bad at all, but some cases were mortal. There was one splendid young chap—Conroy of Naas—for fun and singing he bet all. He come into the tent with a grin on him, and said, 'I've got it in the back, by the doctor's orders, and 'tis here I am to stay, by the doctor's orders.' He was always so gay, and always making his jokes, by the doctor's orders. He raised the heart in us, and we never felt the time passing—only one poor fellow, who was real bad, and was given over, and had seen the priest. That night we

called on Jimmy for a song. 'I'll sing ye a song,' he said, 'and I'm thinking it will be my last, by the doctor's orders. 'Tis a little thing I made up myself the other night when I was on picket.' And with that he tuned up, and began right away in a fine, bold voice :—

“Some mother will lose a son,
Just as the day is dawning ;
Some mother will lose a son
Before to-morrow morning.
It may be you, or it may be me,
But this world will remember for years
The charge that was made at Colenso
By the Donnybrook Fusiliers.’

“We were mighty well pleased, I can tell you, and clapped, and roared for Jim to go on. But he turned to me, and said in a queer voice, ‘I’m finished, Towney,’ and then he lay back and closed his eyes. We thought nothing of it, only that he was tired out and sick, and did not press him, and were sorry to miss the rest of his song.

“The next morning at dawn he never stirred, and when someone went over and lifted his blanket, sure wasn’t he stiff and dead !

“He had been to see the priest the night before Colenso, so he was all right. But he was terribly missed in the tent, and when some of his chums

came looking for him, and was shown where he lay stretched out, I tell you they cried like children.

“ And the other fellow we thought so bad is getting on finely, and so am I ; 'tis a wonderful air for healing, and, please God, I'll be out and back in the firing line before this letter is in your hands, so you need not be unaisy. I'm writing all this for you to give a read to my friends, so that they may know I am well and doing well. I look forward to the day when I'll say good-bye to this cursed yellow veldt and blazing sky, and be back with you all, when the war is over, in my own green little Kerry.

“ I remain, your affectionate brother,

“ SHAMUS.”

CHAPTER XXIV

WHILST these letters from Shamus were being read and discussed in half the cottages around Annacotty, Johanna, in blissful ignorance of the fact that her lover was in the midst of war's alarms, and free from all anxiety on his behalf, doggedly continued her round of monotonous toil. Each night she tasted a meagre reward, when she inscribed a mark on the wall of her den, and crossed off yet another day. And what a day! She rose at the first glimmer of light, made her toilet at the kitchen sink—with icy water, a lump of yellow soap, and a rack comb. Mrs. Flynn above stairs in her snug and comfortable bed was sensible of an added luxury when she heard the kitchen range being raked out, and congratulated herself that it was not her lot to rise in the darkness of a piercing winter's morning, and struggle with smoky fires, and frozen fingers, and with a sigh of complacency turned on her pillow to enjoy yet another doze. Johanna, having boiled the kettle, and admitted the cat and milkman, carried a

cup of hot tea to poor Miss Fergus—the wakeful old creature had been longing for it for hours—it was one of the chief pleasures of her life. Then Johanna went upstairs and laid the drawing-room fire, opened the shutters, swept the room, and “did down” the hall and doorstep, and was preparing breakfast, when Lucy the slattern would appear on the scene, grumbling and injured, requiring a cup of strong black tea to arouse her torpid energies. All day long Johanna’s work was as incessant as it was monotonous—her existence resembled prison life for its colourless, dull routine; but before the spring was well advanced the tedium was broken by a startling incident, and Johanna was once more the means of depriving Mrs. Flynn of a permanent lodger.

* * * * *

Johanna was far too busy to have time to mope, or to sit down and analyse her feelings, and she was fairly content. The black marks had now travelled round three sides of her den; she had bestowed some of her starving affections on Miss Fergus, who in return loved the peasant girl with an outspoken devotion that would have outraged her patrician mother’s sense of propriety.

She also liked old Nixey, and he had been so

flattered by her heartfelt attention that, in spite of Lucy's angry jeers, he had commenced to teach the poor ignoramus to read, and with an agonising struggle (and when the kitchen was quiet—no Lucy there to laugh) she could string together words of four letters. Nursing, lessons, and housework filled up Johanna's day, and when she went to bed she slumbered like a dog—or a child.

Yet Johanna was a light sleeper—as are all half-tame, or wild creatures—and one night, when in dreams she found herself racing down the boreen, followed by the pigs and pup, she was arrested by something less attractive—something tangible, and close at hand. She sat up, pushed back her hair, and realised that “it” was climbing over the backyard wall, and was aware of a scratching of boots, and dropping mortar. There! it had descended on the flags, with a sort of stealthy “dump.” The girl held her breath hard, as she listened to the something, furtively groping at the scullery window, then, without further hesitation, hurried on her shoes and petticoat, lit a candle, snatched up her usual weapon, the tongs, and sallied forth to reconnoitre. Yes, her worst fears were realised—there was the body of a man half-ay through the iron bars of the scullery

window. He was stuck fast. Johanna raised her candle, and a second glance discovered Sheedy.

"What are ye doing?" she demanded; "sure *this* isn't the hall door."

"Ah! don't I know that well enough," he gasped. He seemed dreadfully short of breath, and labouring under extreme excitement. "Help me in, there's a good girl."

"Much *you* know about good girls," she retorted, whilst the wretched lodger wriggled frantically between the bars. "Why should I help you? What good is in ye, if ye can't get in yerself? They say where the head goes the body will follow—and, faith, you're a nice pair! I've a great mind to bring down Mrs. Flynn, and let her see the elegant housebreaker we have! I declare to me sowl ye look like a rat in a trap!"

"Curse you!" he spluttered. "Stop coddin, can't ye, and give me a pull in."

"I'd ten times sooner giv' ye a pull out," rejoined the virago with the red petticoat and long hair; "ye ought to get yer picture drawn!"

Sheedy smothered a hideous threat with difficulty, and then said in his everyday voice:

"Don't be an ass, all your life. Sure I lost my

latch-key, and I don't want to rouse the house. I thought I'd just slip in this way, being so small-sized. Here, take hold, will ye!" His voice became hysterical, as a car rattled through the empty street.

Johanna set down the candle, seized the little lodger by the arms, and gradually dragged him through the window-bars. He was as a child to her for strength and size, and she rested him on the scullery sink, where he gasped for breath. Laws! how she got the smell of spirits off him.

Then Johanna raised the candle, and gravely surveyed Sheedy. His coat was torn, his hands were covered with scratches, his collar was loose. He looked so extraordinarily different to the usual neat, little, horsey person, that she hardly recognised him. And his face! That was almost changed past recognition—the expression was ghastly, the colour a sort of whitey-blue, his hair was matted with sweat, and his teeth chattered in his head, as he crouched on the edge of the sink, panting like a hunted hare.

"What in the world ails ye?" asked the girl; "one would think you were after seeing some shocking sight—or being chased!"

"I've got an awful turn!" he stammered; "I feel terribly bad. I've seen—an—an—an accident."

"Is it at this hour! An' what sort of an accident, will ye tell me?"

"Have ye such a thing as a drop of whisky? Giv' me a drink." With this request, Sheedy scrambled off the sink, staggered into the kitchen, and sat down.

"Here!" said Johanna, bringing a jug and a cup, "take a sup of water. Man alive! but you are shaking like a leaf! Where have you been? I got a great smell of soot, as if the chimney was afire."

"Don't let on about this," he said, waving away the jug, and making an effort to pull himself together. "I know you can be depended upon to hold your tongue."

"Yes, in reason," she retorted; "but if the mistress asks me who came in by the scullery window at two in the morning, I bid to tell her!"

"She'll never ask you. Why would she? Here, give me the candle!" and snatching it from her hand, he half ran, half reeled out of the kitchen.

There were no inquiries the following morning respecting a late arrival, and nothing to remind Johanna of the incident but the fact that her hands and arms were covered with soot—common, black soot. She was slightly surprised to see Sheedy, who rarely entered the kitchen, come down next evening,

and settle himself at the fire with a pipe and a sporting paper.

The reason he submitted for this unusual honour was "a bad sore throat." He certainly looked ill, and unlike himself, and was most curiously restless. It was evident that he was only pretending to read the paper; he was not attending to Mr. Nixey's news; his eyes seemed to wander round perpetually, as if they were half afraid of seeing something! Sheedy's attitude did not escape Johanna. She had the faculty of close observation—another wild trait—and drew conclusions with a strange, but sure instinct. What ailed the man? she wondered to herself—he was neither reading, nor listening, nor sitting still. No one would have supposed that Johanna's thoughts, as she sat, knitting with flying fingers and downcast eyes, were focussed on the little huddled figure with the livid face, who shivered by the fire.

Mr. Nixey was gratified to find his audience thus increased, and read aloud war news, fires, and shipwrecks with additional *empressement*. Sam Sheedy's sore throat lasted for a whole week. For seven nights he appeared in the kitchen, shuddered by the fire, and was the last to leave, and that with

evident reluctance. Yet Mr. Nixey's readings were not the attraction—he never simulated the faintest interest, save on a most notable occasion.

* * * * *

One evening, as Lucy and Johanna sat attentive and expectant, whilst the old man opened and shook out the paper, with his usual air of suppressed importance :

“Hullo!” he exclaimed, in a loud, excited voice, “just listen to this, all of you.”

In response to the summons, even Sheedy raised his head, and took his pipe out of his mouth.

After a moment's dramatic pause, the clerk read aloud, with sonorous tones, and considerable unction :

“Shocking murder in Dublin—An old lady beaten to death—Mysterious crime.’”

He paused again, in order to give his hearers time to realise the horror on which they were about to sup.

The tremendous silence was broken by a sharp, quick smash. Merely Sheedy's pipe—it had slipped from his fingers, struck the flags, and scattered into fifty pieces.

CHAPTER XXV

I SAAC NIXEY enjoyed the delight of making the blood of his listeners curdle. He stared grimly over his paper at the two women, cleared his throat, and began, in a deliberate bass :

“Early this morning, the fact of a shocking murder was discovered in Willow Cottage, Eblana Road, Rathgar, the victim being an elderly lady named Maria Elgee, who lived alone. From the particulars regarding the crime, it appears but too certain that it was premeditated. The murder was discovered by the police, who had their attention drawn to the fact that the old lady had not been seen for several days, that knocks and ringings were unnoticed, and that there was no smoke from the chimneys. It was feared that she was ill. The fear was more than confirmed, for on entering the house, and the right-hand parlour, the sight was a ghastly one. Lying on the floor, in a pool of blood, was Miss Elgee.”

Here the reader again paused, cleared his throat, and glowered over his spectacles at his audience.

"A glance at the face made it but too plain that life had been extinct for some days. A thorough search in the cottage was instituted—it is a comfortable residence, containing four rooms and a kitchen—and other discoveries were brought to light; the weapon with which the crime was committed being found in a room to the left of the entrance, and when the police entered this, evidence of the murder was everywhere visible, for it was here that the deed had been done, the body dragged across the passage, in order that its presence might not incommode the wretch as he ransacked the drawers and bureaux for plunder. The poker lay on the floor, smeared with blood; but it was with a kitchen chopper that the death-blow had been dealt.

"The old lady when attacked was evidently sitting in an armchair near the fire—presumably preparing a cup of tea, as the kettle was still on the hob. She had been reading her Bible when surprised, for it lay open on the table, with her spectacles marking the place. There had evidently been a momentary struggle, a cap string and a piece of gold chain were found, and the room was in the greatest disorder. Everything portable of any value had been carried off. It was well known that Miss Elgee was rich, and of a saving nature. As years went by she had become more and more parsimonious, and had, since

her servant's death, lived alone, doing all her own work, marketing, and cooking. She was civil to her neighbours, but reserved, and rarely admitted a visitor. It was whispered that she kept a large amount of gold and notes in the house, and that at night she used to spread it out on the table, and count it over and over. From a careful examination made by the police, it was plain that an entrance had not been effected by the windows; these were securely fastened, and intact; the door, too, was locked, barred, and chained, and had to be broken open by force. At the back premises the doors and windows were not only fast, but their bolts and locks were covered with dust and cobwebs, the accumulation of months. How the murderer contrived to enter this strongly and securely closed abode, is a fact which is shrouded in the deepest mystery. The police are using every effort to elucidate the matter, and to track the criminal.

"The Coroner, Mr. James, has been communicated with, and the inquest will probably be held to-morrow."

"Now," said Nixey, as he laid down the paper, and wiped his glasses, "what do you think of that? Doesn't it make the flesh creep on ye? There has not been such a murder for years. The poor old woman

sitting alone, reading her Bible, and having her head bashed in."

"Who could have done it?" said Lucy, with wide-opened eyes; "all the doors and windows fast, and not a sign of a living soul. It beats creation. It's like as if the house was haunted, and some devil lives there! What's your opinion, Mr. Sheedy?" and she turned and looked at him. At first Mr. Sheedy made no attempt to reply. His face was white as a sheet of cardboard, and wet with perspiration, which he wiped away with a red sporting handkerchief covered with yellow horse-shoes. When at last he spoke, in answer to an expectant pause—his voice was husky and unsteady.

"She being so queer, a sort of mad old miser, may have made away with herself!"

"Well now, I declare, I never heard such nonsense as *that!*" exclaimed Nixey, in a peevish key, as he crossed his knees, and assumed an air of judicial solemnity. "It's plain, that you know nothing about the laws of evidence, or you would not talk such ignorant folly! *How* could an old woman beat out her own brains with a hatchet?"

"It was a chopper," corrected Lucy.

"Very well then, a chopper—and drag her own

corpse across a passage to another room, then ransack the place, and carry off her own property in gold and notes. Will you tell me that, av ye plase?"

"But there's not a trace of anyone from outside," argued Lucy; "all the doors locked and barred."

"Yes, and I grant you that that is a peculiar feature of the case, and puzzles even *me*. The deed was done by some desperately clever fellow. He wanted money badly."

"Faix, we all do that!" ejaculated Lucy.

"Maybe he never wanted to kill the poor creature," resumed Nixey, "only to frighten her; but she was too noisy. He got in all right, and he got out, and he has got off; and, with six days' good start, is far enough away by this time. Oh, it was a nicely planned affair. Perhaps there was two in it. I don't know the locality myself; but I'll walk round, and have a look at it to-morrow; and now that I think of it, Lucy, your friend Joe could tell us all about it. Sure, he was in lodgings up Eblana way—before he went on the job to Belfast."

"Isn't it terrible to think of the poor lady murdered there all alone!" exclaimed Johanna, speaking for the first time; "and it might have been Miss Fergus!"

"Oh ! *she's* all right," scoffed Lucy. "That old wan will never die. She'll bury us all."

"Yes, she holds a hard grip of her poor soul ; but she must go some day," argued Nixey ; "all flesh is grass !"

"Maybe so ; but dried-up old maids is like hay. Johanna, me girl, it's time you were going up with her hot bottle."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE following night, as the little audience had settled down to enjoy the usual reading, a violent ringing of bells summoned Lucy from her seat. She presently returned breathless, and gasped out—

“Two bells ringing together is a sure sign someone is going to leave the house——”

“Bah, that’s an everyday affair!” rejoined Nixey, as he turned over the paper; “not like this greet murder—up in Rathgar. And, bedad, here it is!” he announced, with a flourish of the journal, and an expression of sardonic satisfaction.

“THE RATHGAR MURDER.

“INQUEST AND VERDICT.

“A jury having been sworn, the Coroner addressed them, and said that a very dastardly crime had been committed in that house. A poor old woman, whose body they would be called upon to view, was the victim. Her age was seventy-six, her habits were

eccentric—it was her custom to retire at eight o'clock, when she locked herself in, and put a chain on the door—so that no person without her knowledge could be admitted. There was no doubt that the murder was premeditated, and in the interests of justice it would be necessary to examine all the evidence that might throw light on the occurrence.

“The evidence of an elderly woman, named Jane Brady, was taken. She lived next door to the deceased, and was the last person who had seen Miss Elgee alive. On the afternoon of January 23rd she had met her returning home, laden with parcels—it being Saturday. That same night, at a late hour, she heard a curious noise in the next house, as if a creel of turf had been thrown down. She also heard voices, and a strange cry—but she thought it was a cat. There was no groaning.

“Subsequently, the jury being accommodated at the Horse Shoe Tavern, Dr. Browne deposed that the body was in a condition of ‘rigor mortis,’ there was a lacerated wound on the head, extending to the bone. The injuries were not self-inflicted. There was human blood on the fender, hearthstone, rug—grey human hair on the poker.

“Pat Murphy, a labourer, deposed that he knew deceased well by sight. She always wore a purple shawl. He passed Willow Cottage twice a day. On the Saturday, 23rd January, he passed it twice with

his wife, going to town at eight o'clock, returning at 12.30. On the last occasion, when he was within ten yards, he observed a man creeping out of the gate. On seeing him, he turned about, and went inside. Witness ran across the road, swung round the pier, and looked in—he saw the man standing.

“The Coroner: ‘Where?’

“‘About two yards inside the gate. He backed towards the house. He was a small-sized man.’ Witness was going after him, when his wife dragged him back. He shouted, ‘All right, old dad, I’ll know you again!’

“‘When I next saw him, he was stooping and looking through the gate to see if I was going on.’

“The Coroner: ‘What else did you observe?’

“‘That he was not the owner of the house.’

“‘Was the public lamp burning?’

“‘Yes, it throws a reflection one yard inside the gate. I could swear to the man. He was very under-sized, and wore a dark suit and cap. I thought he was there for robbery. Only for my wife, I’d have had him that night.’

“After some consideration, Verdict, Murder against some person or persons unknown.”

During the reading Sheedy sat cowering forward, every nerve evidently strung to tension—his face livid, and his lips blue.

Lucy's thoughts had wandered to the trimming of a green velvet hat; but Johanna was still brooding and watchful, her entire attention concentrated on Sam Sheedy. All at once an idea dawned upon her slow mind. She realised a fact, suddenly and vividly; her features stiffened; her eyes took a hard expression.

Meanwhile Nixey laid down the paper, and presently remarked in his most legal manner—

“Now this is the strangest case I ever heard of in my considerable professional experience. Murder and robbery—no thread of a clue—the perpetrator gone scot free—not a soul knows who did it!”

“There you are wrong!” cried Johanna, and if her lips were dry, and her heart palpitated, both voice and eye were steady. “I know, and *I* can show you who murdered the poor lady for her money. Here is the man!” and she sprang up and put her hand on Sheedy.

“Ah! get away, you mad woman!” he screamed, in a strange falsetto voice, striking at her as he spoke.

“I’m not mad!” she rejoined, and her cheeks flamed; “and ’twas *you* done it!”

“Arrah! Johanna,” cried Lucy, “can’t you sit down, an’ shut yer mouth, and lave a chap alone. ’Tis out of your senses you are!”

"I'm not, and I'll just tell you all about it. I know as well as if I was there meself—which God forbid! 'Twas done by a man as thin as a worm, who crawled down the chimney. He tore his coat to rags, and scratched his hands, and lost his latch-key—if that latch-key is ever found, 'twill hang him! A sore throat, indeed!" she scoffed. "'Tis the rope he feels—where it *ought* to be!"

Long before she concluded, Sheedy was on his feet, looking not merely grim but murderous. He was shaking all over. The pink sporting "special" crackled in his hand.

"For God's sake, will you hold your tongue, girl!" expostulated Nixey; "they will hear you in the street, and we will have the polis."

"So best," she retorted, turning on him fiercely.

"And what's all this?" demanded a scolding voice from the doorway. Mrs. Flynn stared about with her little keen eyes, and saw Johanna standing up—out of herself, her eyes and cheeks ablaze. When very quiet people are moved to emotion, their condition is generally abnormal. Johanna seemed as one possessed.

And there was Sheedy, his teeth set, his face working, apparently ready to fly at the girl's throat.

"Mr. Nixey," resumed Mrs. Flynn, "in the name

of goodness, what's all this row about—it's a disgrace!"

"Ah, sure, it's nothing at all," he replied, in his most wheedling key. "I've just been reading a murder, and it has taken such a hold of Johanna here, that she is going off her head."

"What are ye saying, girl?" she asked, turning on her sharply.

"I'm saying this"—speaking in jerks—"that Sheedy did it. Yes, as sure as I'm standing here. And I *will* speak, what's in my mind." She raised her voice, and the light of the fire seemed to be reflected in her eyes. "That Saturday night, I heard a queer groping noise in the scullery, and I found a man trying to squeeze through the bars. It was him," pointing with her hand. "Look at the face on him! Wouldn't he like to murder me now? What a chance he has! I'm twice as strong and big, and *I'm* not an aged woman he can come behind with a chopper!" She stopped short, and caught her breath hard.

"Damn you, you devil!" screeched Sheedy. His eyes, as he fixed them on her, had a peculiar glazed appearance.

"He was about half drunk," she continued, with a sort of sob, "and awful short of breath, and smelt

like a chimney on fire. He was covered with scratches, and black with soot. The murder was done by someone that come down a flue. There was money taken. A sovereign fell out of Sheedy's pocket, his coat was stiff with papers—I got the feel of them, when I dragged him in between the bars. More nor that, there was blood on his boots. I cleaned them, and I'll swear to it."

The girl spoke so rapidly, and with such passion, no one could stem the torrent of her indictment.

"Listen to this," she pursued. "Since that night when I helped him in, and he asked me to hold my tongue, he is afraid to be alone. He is all of a sweat and a tremble, he burns a candle till daylight. For why? For fear of *her*! What was he doing that Saturday evening? Ask him where he was?" she panted, as she raised her hand, and pointed at the livid wretch. "Look at the murderer, all of you! and in God's name call in the police!"

For a moment this splendid figure, and her ringing eloquence, continued to dominate every thought and eye. But presently cool reaction asserted itself, and Mrs. Flynn, the ever-voluble, cried—

"Do ye want to destroy the character of me house, Johanna Daly? Are you mad, to go and give out of your own head as poor Sheedy done a terrible

murder, and him sitting there so quiet and so dacent! You are just making a holy show of yerself, and only I know ye, I would declare ye had drink taken. Come, now, all of you clear off, and let the girl go to her bed. It's past eleven o'clock, and no time to be wasting good coal and gas."

And as this stirring woman spoke, she drove her lodgers from the warm kitchen. Sheedy was the last to leave, and as he shuffled out, the look he cast on Johanna—a look intensified by his pointed ears and furious eyes—was devilish, yet craven. It was the scowl of a frightened fiend.

"Now go to your bed, Johanna," continued her mistress, "and shut your mouth. It's not often you open it, but when you do, it's like a blazing furnace. Who would know you, roaring and barging, and carrying on like a play-actress agin Sheedy, and saying he had a hand in that bloody murder?"

"No, but two hands," corrected the girl, undauntedly. "He did it, as sure as I draw breath. Sure, ever since, is not he made of money?"

He had certainly paid up six weeks' arrears, in good gold, and bought a dozen of whisky, boxes of cigars, new clothes, and a solid leather port-manteau.

But Mrs. Flynn instantly chased these facts out of her mind, and repeated—

“Now go to your bed, and keep yourself quiet, Johanna. I can’t have these ructions,” turning the gas off as she spoke. “You will have light enough from the fire, and when to-morrow comes, I hope you will behave yourself, and be sorry for such scandalous behaviour.”

CHAPTER XXVII

BUT to-morrow failed to bring repentance to Johanna, and Sheedy came no more to the kitchen. He had borrowed an oil stove, which warmed his room, and there enjoyed whisky, tobacco, and his own all-sufficient society. Meanwhile Mrs. Flynn kept anxious watch and ward in the hall, and took particular care that there was no collision between the forces of the lower region and the top storey, as she had little desire to lose either a lodger (who paid when he could), or an excellent and cheap servant. She gave a sharp word to old Nixey. For the future the reading of murders to this wild, excitable Kerry woman, was sternly prohibited. Just about this period, or within a week of the great kitchen scene, Johanna met with a serious accident. Coming down the stairs in the dark, carrying an empty scuttle, she tripped over an obstacle, which some declared was a tin candlestick—of all strange things—but others vowed that it was a piece of string.

Whichever it happened to be, it nearly caused the death of Johanna, who fell headlong from the top of the flight on to the hard flags, and there she remained, a prone, insensible heap, discovered later by lazy Lucy, who roused the house with her piercing cries.

"Johanna was stone dead." She ran screaming this news to Mrs. Flynn, who had the sense to raise the girl, lay her on her bed, and send for the doctor. He pronounced that no bones were fractured, and that it was a miracle the girl had not broken her neck. She would be bruised and stiff for a long time, and had sustained severe concussion of the brain. Oh no, she was a fine, strong, healthy young woman, and she would not die.

For three whole days Johanna lay as if a corpse—unconscious and motionless—to the sincere grief of Miss Fergus, and the consternation of the cat, for they both felt that this still form represented their chief and only friend. The old lady stole down to the kitchen—an unprecedented excursion—and gazed on the white, still face, pillowed on heaps of black hair, and chafed the cold hands, and conferred with Lucy over the case. She paid for the doctor, out of

her pitiful income, and she missed her attendant at every turn. The cat, too, came and sat on the bed, and stared with round-eyed solemnity. Apparently he took a dismal view of the catastrophe; and it was not only her two personal friends who so sorely lamented Johanna; her services were a serious loss to Mrs. Flynn, for the routine work of the house was utterly dislocated. The half-sisters divided the slavey's work, with highly inflamed tempers, snappings, and scoldings. Everything was in a muddle—meals were late, fires went out, orders were forgotten. It seemed to be a continual scene of washing up, carrying coals, and setting tables, without an interval of leisure.

It happened during this period of ceaseless occupation that Mr. Sheedy effected his exit. He carried down his luggage himself one evening after dark, put his portmanteau and bags on a cab, and was driven away—where? His destination was to the King's Bridge Railway Station, where he hoped to catch the night mail for Queenstown. He had booked his passage on a White Star Liner for New York, and entered his name as Walker.

When Lucy (ever the bearer of ill news) flew to her sister and breathlessly announced—

"Annie, Sheedy is off," and indicated a distant cab rumbling away down the road, Mrs. Flynn received a painful and unexpected shock, and began to fear that there *was* something in Johanna's story after all!

But her suspicions were agreeably dispelled, and her spirits revived, by finding an envelope in the lodger's room containing two sovereigns, and a bit of a note to say—

"MRS. FLYNN,—I am leaving and enclose rent.—
S. SHEEDY."

Lucy loudly declared that it was Johanna's wicked tongue that had driven the poor unfortunate man away. Well, whatever its failings, Johanna's tongue was still enough now.

After several days she began to recover consciousness. She rose from her lumpy couch, and by degrees resumed her work, though her face was white and set, and there was a strained expression in her eyes. The girl could not remember *how* the accident had occurred, but she thought it was a string that caught her round the legs, and lifted her feet from under her. She disliked inactivity, and

although the doctor ordered absolute rest and silence, she went about her tasks as usual—Mrs. Flynn offering no serious objection. The convalescent seemed slow and stunned, forgetting the names of things and people, forgetting where the knives were kept, forgetting even Sheedy! Altogether Johanna was decidedly queer, and if she had never been bright in her best days, she was now dull to stupidity.

“By my oath, I think there was something in her notion about the man,” remarked Mr. Nixey in a confidential chat with his landlady. “Did you read about the latch-key being found—and the police raising Dublin for the owner?”

“Latch-key!—what’s a latch-key? Balderdash!” protested the widow.

“Faix, it’s the *key* to the crime,” he rejoined. “And I’ll tell you more. That chap did his big best to break the girl’s neck; it was *he* made the trap on the stairs. I saw him prowling about there that same afternoon, and as sure as I sit here——”

“There now, that will do, Mr. Nixey; do you want to ruin my nice respectable house with your latch-keys and broken necks, and traps? Upon my honour and conscience, you’re as bad as that fool

Johanna. She was never very smart, but since she had that crack on her head she wants a day in the week."

"Are you going to send her to Richmond Asylum?"

"Augh, no; *I'm* not a cruel, hard-hearted woman."

"Aren't ye?" he sighed with significance. "'Tis myself knows better nor that!"

"No, no, she gets through her work all the same as ever, and she's a quiet creature. It was your powerful reading, with such grand expression, that took a hold of her brain and turned it. I'd no notion she was such a terribly excitable girl."

While these events had been going forward in Sherlock Terrace, Joe Whelan was an inmate of a hospital in Belfast. He had been laid up with a bad attack of what he called influenza, but his doctors and his bed ticket gave it another name.

He came out pulled down in appearance, low in funds, and short in temper. The Liffey Street widow was married—this was one disagreeable surprise: the departure of Sheedy supplied another and even worse disappointment. "Sheedy gone! Impossible—and how, and why?" he demanded of

Lucy. "Sheedy owed him a lot of money, and he had claims on the chap. Why did he go?"

"Well, you have to thank Johanna Daly for chasing him out of the house," responded Lucy with acrimony; "sure she had the man the same as in a white jelly!"

"I'll jelly her if I get the chance! I was looking for Sheedy—for some business."

"If it was money, then, he was full of it before he went away."

"Do ye tell me so? How do ye know?"

"Oh, it's aisy to tell when an Irishman has money, though yer friend Sheedy only stood treat to himself. He had a fine roll of notes tied up with a bit of whipcord, and kept it in his new portmanteau."

"The scutt! I wish I could lay a hand on a few of them, for I'm mighty short. I'll be looking to borrow some off you, Lucy, me darlin'," putting his arm round her waist, and approaching his good-looking greasy face to hers. "Have ye any small change about ye, me jewel?"

"Then Joey, me dear, I'm just as tight as yourself now, by bad luck."

"Ah, then where on earth is Sam Sheedy? He will give me a hand."

"Goodness knows where he is, for Johanna has put the fear of death on him!"

"Spake plain, will ye?"

"'Twas about the murder—didn't ye hear of it?—of the old woman in Eblana Road."

"Where would I hear anything in hospital? What murder?"

"Of an old lady, a great miser, that lived up there in Willow Cottage, and was found with her head bashed in, and the place all knocked and tossed about, and no trace of a——"

Joe suddenly removed his arm from her waist. His face had become the colour of suet. He drew a long, hard breath.

"Go on—go—on," he urged huskily.

"Faix, the papers have it all, and in big letters too. Old Nixey was reading it one evening to me and Johanna and Sheedy, and all of a sudden she flew out, and denounced him, and raged about the rope and the police!"

"An' for why?"

"Because the night it was done, he come in at the scullery window, a mask of soot, and all of a tremble, his pockets full of money. There was"—suddenly lowering her voice—"blood on him."

"Oh, great fathers!"

"Yes, it bid to be done by a small chap, that could go down the chimney. Joe! Joe!" suddenly catching a sight of his face, "sure you don't think *he* done it?"

"No; but I'm sure of it!" he rejoined with energy.

"So Johanna was right?" and her face twitched.

"She was. Sheedy was crazy mad for money—got anyhow—to be off to America. He was middling hard up. I told him of the lone, rich old miser woman up Eblana way, half in joke, and how she had sacks of money, in the front room on the left. But oh, see now, I feel a great wakeness in myself! I knew he was a hard-bitten sort of chap—I knew he had done his seven years—but, as I live, I never dreamt he would go and murder her!"

"Oh, Joey darling, is it that weenchie little white-faced fellow? I'll never go to believe it!"

"Ye can plase yerself about that—he did it," he answered roughly; "I feel it in the back of me bones—stole down the chimney, and up again, and just packed with notes! Oh, the cruel, bloody-minded, deceitful, thankless beast! Let me out of this till I go over to the Three Harps and get the taste of him out of my mouth!"

"Ye will keep it dark, Joe darlin'?" urged Lucy with trembling lips.

"Av course. Do ye take me for the same pattern as mad Johanna?" And with a scowl at his lady-love, Mr. Whelan slouched away.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHILST Johanna was slowly recovering from her fall, and gradually recalling her shattered memories, Shamus was still marching and fighting under alien skies—a shabby bearded sergeant, whom his own brother would have found some difficulty in recognising.

This same brother had received various other letters from Shamus, two of which are here reproduced.

.

“FIELD FORCE, OUTSIDE LADYSMITH,

“*February 29th.*

“DEAR DAN,—I got your letters safely—two the same day—but the socks that would have been kindly welcome, went to Joe McCarthy of the Faugh-a-Ballaghs by mistake, and he is marching in them now. Crowds of fine things are sent to us from home, but so far all that has come my way is a blue worsted Tammy Shanter. I should tell you that I am getting my health well, and that we have had some heavy fighting since I wrote to you

from hospital, and are now entirely used to war. I had a great contract to get out of the doctor's hands, but I carried on so persistent, and gave that much annoyance, they were glad to be shut of me, and I got discharged in time to be up at Spearman's Farm, and Acton Homes. It would do you good to have seen our artillery running the Boers out of that. Our gunners is great men! Then we had seven days and nights fighting up and round a hill called Spion Kop. We were in the Irish Brigade, of course, and in the heart of the action. For three days and nights we were lying out on some high ground, with nothing to do but listen to the whistling of the Boers' bullets. It was baking and frozen we were by turns—little sleep, food scarce, just a few biscuits and a couple of kettles of tea for the whole regiment, and us getting it harder every day. At last we were shifted down. We were at the base, and there was another regiment would not go on to their officer's liking, and he roars out—

“‘Clear the way, and let the Irishmen to the front.’

“’Tis where we like to be, you know yourself, Dan. And we come on at the double, and the others give us a great cheer. We charged the hill in short rushes, taking what cover we could, and losing a lot of men. But we fought our way to the top, and scooped the Boers out of the trenches. This was Bastion Hill, above Venter's Spruit, and here we

lay two days. It was hard work—more kicks than ha'pence, more death than glory. Our maxim gun was just bedded in cartridges, and made good play, and Andy Todd, the man that served it, was a grand fellow! He stood up, and took the range, no matter how hot the fire, and when one bullet sliced off half his ear, he only laughed and said, 'It's not enough for them to be shooting, but they want to *fox* me as well!' We piled arms, and relieved one another every six hours: the shells and bullets was like hail, and we lost a lot of men and officers, and so did the Lancashires on our left. There was three officers badly hit, and only two stretchers come to carry them off, and one—him that was worst wounded—would not be stirred. The life was barely in him, and I heard him say: 'It's no use to take *me*—take the other.' I was close to him, as he lay dying, and I heard him giving his orders to his colour-sergeant, and speaking of the company's accounts as calmly as if he was in the orderly room. Then he took out a letter he had about him, and held it before his eyes till he died. I tell you my heart was aching for that poor young fellow. The Boers made great practice on the stretcher bearers, and the wounded could not be shifted; it was getting terribly rough up there, and after a time we were retired, for the Boers swept us with their fire, and we could not see them. That's what half kills us—blazing away at nothing, and

them plugging bullets into us every time. I was one of the burying party on Spion Kop; it's the worst sort of party at all, and I'm not going to discourse of the sights I saw there. We dug the graves with our bayonets—I tell ye them bayonets are as sharp as razors by this time. The graves were thirty feet long, and some of us was crying all the time we filled them. After Spion Kop we had a sort of breathing spell, and then we set to again.

“On the 17th of February there was what they call ‘a general advance.’ We were working through the thorn, and scrubs, and wire, and over the dongas, and on to a ridge, where we were in sight of Ladysmith, with the enemy entrenched between us on three hills. It was at Hart Hill we had the toughest work of all. The Inniskillings were in front advancing over everything, working up steadily, though the hill was alive with Boers and bullets, and they were just mown down by volleys. Then came the order to retire, but there was scarcely a man left. We got some heavy fighting, too, and our colonel was killed, but the Inniskillings lost dreadful. They were lying in heaps after the battle, and some of their wounded was there for six-and-twenty hours.

“There was a sort of a truce on Sunday, to carry off the wounded and bury our dead, and on the hill where our men lay, the Boers came out of their trenches, and walked about among us—old men and

boys; fellows with white beards; fine, strapping, young men, and great big chaps, all dressed anyhow in tweeds, or in corduroy, and most shockingly slovenly, but each carrying a bandolier and an elegant Mauser rifle.

"And did not a great hairy chap, with a green bow on his hat, come up to me as bold as brass, and says he—

"‘You quit this, and come over to us, me fine fellow, and fight for liberty and Ireland—you’re on the wrong side!’

"‘And who are ye, at all,’ says I; ‘you’re no Boer man?’

"‘I’m as Irish as yerself,’ says he.

"‘Killing yer own countrymen, and enticing me to desert to the enemy; you clear out,’ says I, ‘or truce or no truce I’ll shoot ye dead,’ and I hurried him up with a prick of the bayonet, and he skelped off, looking what he was—the sweepings of creation.

"It was of a Sunday morning I saw a sergeant of the Inniskillings sitting on the side of a road, with his face in his hands, roaring crying, and I says, ‘What ails ye, man alive?’ ‘The whole regiment is wiped out,’ he answered; ‘there’s not more than twenty men and two officers come out of action.’

"It was awful, and that’s a fact. Hart’s Hill was the grave of those splendid fine fellows. They charged up as keen and determined as ever was seen,

and was swept by a blazing fire at every yard. It's the retire that soldiers dread, not the advance, and when the retire sounded, and they tried to fall back, the Boers' cross fire caught them, and the hill being frightful steep, a good many fell down the precipices and were killed, or mangled. Pieter's Hill was fine for us—we stormed it, and had one hundred and two guns playing on the Boers, and them sitting behind trenches picking us off. The bullets hailed lead, and every now and then you'd hear someone say, 'Oh, I'm hit!' You'll think I'm a liar when I tell you that all the time the men were laughing and joking, and when a shot went past they shouted, 'Missed, by right,' or 'Missed, by left.' We worked and dragged ourselves up; the Royal Scots Fusiliers behind us got excited and run past us right into the trenches, bayoneting right and left. I saw an awful sight there—a dead Boer woman with a rifle in her hand. She was killed with lyddite. I believe a lot of women were in the trenches. We caught a good few of the Dutchmen. When the enemy can run to their horses in time, they slip off from the trenches, but now and then we are too quick for them, and then they go down on their knees, and throw up their hands, begging for mercy. Is it mercy—when they have been potting us snug and safe behind a rock for hours and hours? On Pieter's Hill there was nothing to be seen but blood and bits of shell and dead

Boers. It was *our* day. Many's the trick they play us—it's called being 'slim,' though they are stout built. I've seen with my own two eyes an elegant new Nordenfelt gun being taken out of an ambulance waggon—red cross and all. And at the base of Spion Kop, it's known that a Boer, dressed like an English officer in karki, come and ordered a lot of men into a position, and led them right into the lines of the enemy, who fired on them, and scarcely a man escaped. And as to white flag tricks, and spies, there was no end to them. I saw one chap caught for the second time. He had lied himself off before. His pockets were full of papers and a heliograph. When he was nabbed and searched, he got very white, for well he knew what was coming. An order was given to take him behind a hill. We never saw him again. War is a hard thing, Dan, and hardens a man. After Glencoe we all went round looking for townies and shaking hands, and asking questions; but now it's different. God help us, we are getting used to death! A chap will say, 'Who owns this mess tin?' 'O'Reilly; he was killed at Lombard's Kop.' Or, 'Did ye see so-and-so?' 'Oh, he is dead—died of wounds in De Aar.' It's a queer sight to see men in tents, all rags and bandages, cracking their jokes, and telling stories, and roaring, till all of a sudden they hear a groan—it's someone dying, and they are quiet for a bit. And maybe ye'd see a pack of fellows that had been

in a heavy action in the morning, playing a football match the same afternoon—it seems strange.

“Then if I was to try to tell ye of all the things the men has done for one another—actually giving their lives, and venturing them away as if they was of no account—it would keep me writing for a week. There’s many a chap, that no one hears about, that has earned the Cross, and if ye were to tell him so to his face, he’d say ye were a liar. I never believed in the bravery one hears tales of, till now. Seeing the officers with a bit of a stick walking along the firing line, and giving their orders, and finding ranges, as cool as if they were sitting at home; and to watch the artillery galloping into action, over awful places—the men lying flat on the horses, the guns up on end; to see a bit of a drummer-boy, with a wound in his head, beating away his drum, and laughing; to see them fellows that swam the Tugela in the teeth of the enemy and fetched over the pontoons: I tell ye, Dan, these things make a man feel proud of being a *man*, and a soldier.

“After all the fighting to clear the road, we were in camp one morning, when a galloper with a blue envelope goes tearing past, and screeches out, ‘Lady-smith was relieved last night!’ With that we all stood up and cheered our big best. And now I must end, for the letter corporal is coming round.—I am your brother,

“SHAMUS MCCARTHY, *Sergeant.*”

CHAPTER XXIX

"WITH THE UNION BRIGADE,
"ORANGE STATE, S.A.

"DEAR DAN,—I suppose ye saw in the paper that the Donnybrooks marched into Ladysmith first of all the relieving force. We were only 400, instead of 1,000 strong now, but in the post of honour. There was a fine mark to the regiment! and although we were a scandal for dirt and rags, not changing our clothes day or night, we stepped out our best. Holy Peter, I'll never forget them men in Ladysmith! all as clean and smart as if going on full-dress parade, their eyes sunk back in their heads, their jaws sticking out, and hardly able to stand, much less *walk*—just dying on their feet. When I looked at them, I declare to you I felt worse, than when I was going over a battle-field. We gave them what bits we had about us, and they bolted them like lions. Danny me boy, we had the best of it outside, fighting; it was better than being sniped, and shelled, and starved. And the siege lasted one hundred and eighteen days. I'd a pal in the artillery in

53 Battery, and he told me he thought that if they lived another week, they'd be dead. It was not long before the supply waggons came into the town, which was a godsend. I had some talk with this chap, Branigan, his people live near Carragh Lake. He told me they kept a regular roster for the horses as were to be killed, and it went to his heart, when his own mare's turn came—but they were just skin and bone, the poor creatures, only getting two pounds of corn a day, and fifteen pounds of grass, if it was to be had. But the Boers always sniped the forage parties. The troops had places to go into by the river, when the shells were coming. A bugle used to sound the alarm—for the shell took fifteen seconds to travel—but the men called these shelters "funk holes" and would not make use of them, until they were forced by the orders and punishments. They had a red collie dog in the battery, that used to be as gay as anything, going out barking with the guns—and making great disturbance. So one day there was an order given to shoot him, as they saw him flying along through the high grass, they let fly and the selfsame evening, didn't he trot in as if nothing had happened, so he was let off for good and all. They had terrible work on the 6th of January, the night attack at Wagon Hill, the 53 Battery was hurried up to Cæsar's camp firing at awful close range, it was like *Hell*. The Boers fought desperate, and there was thunder and rain all the time. They fought

17 hours—the Gordons, Rifles, and Manchesters and Gloucesters, and the sailors and cavalry. There was a lot of bravery on that day. The Devons fought the Boers hand to hand, and cleared them off Wagon Hill with the bayonet, and Brannigan boasted as one of his fellows, as was serving a gun, when a shell lit, and took both his legs, and all he says, was ‘Roll me away and get the gun forward—now then, buck up number two! Come and lay off!’ Did you ever know the like of that for spirit? He was carried away on a stretcher, smoking a cigarette, and, barring that he has no legs, he is as well and stout as ever to this day. From Ladysmith we went on to Kimberley, so you see we were pretty well fed up with fighting. For eating we had bully beef and biscuit—sometimes nothing but what we could find. I crossed the Vaal to the relief of Mafeking with the Union Brigade, and one morning early we came to the river, and at the far side we could see the trenches, and the rifles sticking out, and we said, ‘this is going to be hot: we are going to get it here,’ but we marched on all the same, and when we shinned up the bank, sure all we found was one Boer dying in his blankets—the rest had run. We collared sacks full of rusks, and steaks in pans on the fire—splendid fresh meat, and rugs, and a heap of Boer clothes, that we badly wanted. Ye should have seen some chaps in civilian trousers and sleeve waistcoats. That was a great day for us! But afterwards

we had a bit of starvation. No need to write of it here.

"I've seen some sore sights, Dan, and somehow I feel as if all the fun and jokes was knocked out of me. I mind a reservist in hospital—he was dying, and calling by name on his wife and children; and there was a fine young fellow lying next me, in the firing line on Hussar Hill—a trooper in the Light Horse—a gentleman. We were side by side for hours, and I'd a liking for him, and I'd a notion he was down on his luck. He was leaning up to take an observation, when he was hit. 'My God,' says he, 'it's a hard world.' Then his head fell forward on his arms, and he was dead.

"As to what the horses have suffered in this war, and the trek oxen—which you've never seen the like of—I couldn't tell you, for I cannot bear to *think* of it myself. To see a wounded troop-horse trying to follow up the regiment and neighing, and falling back deserted would melt the heart of a stone.

"Glory be to God, we are over the worst of the campaign, and I hope a few months will see me going home a full sergeant, with a medal and clasps. There's no loot out here, by order. I found a gold watch and chain, that would become you well, but I left it where it was. Them Boers are full of loot, and thieving, and strip the clothes and boots off the dead and wounded, and their holsters are always crammed with stuff.

"At the same time I've come across Boers as were really fair-spoken, decent people, and that I'd a great liking for, and some of our prisoners was treated real well. I'm glad all is going right at home. Tell Biddy Burke her grandson is a great fellow, and a credit. Tim Sugrue was killed by a wounded Boer. Pat Kelly is in hospital with enteric at Bloemfontein, and my cousin Mick is up the Modder. God be with you all. "Your affectionate brother,

"S. MCCARTHY, *Sergeant.*

"P.S.—No word of Johanna, ye say, and the old man greatly failed. Some nights when I'm out on picket, with the pitch-black veldt all around me, and a few stars overhead, staring down on it, and me, a comforting thought keeps telling me, that somewhere, far away maybe,—Johanna is *waiting*.

* * * * *

"MY DEAR DAN,—Here I am in hospital again, by cruel bad luck, and have been laid up for weeks. First I got hit, and then I took enteric, and it was that, that nearly finished me. We were out on convoy duty, one night, and cut off, and in a bad way near Fourteen Streams, when our officer calls for a volunteer to run to the signal station to apply for supports. I got there all safe, being, as ye know,

mighty quick upon me legs. The bullets was like hail, and I had a right, they said, to stay where I was, but of course I was mad to get back to my own—as was only in *raison*—and on the return journey, the beggars put two holes in me. This is a wonderful air for healing wounds and for health, and I believe you will bury me at home yet. The Boers is still very audacious and troublesome, and as for De Wet, you might as well chase a flea in a blanket. Still, please God, we are getting near the end.

“Excuse this bad writing from your loving brother,

“SHAMUS MCCARTHY,

“Colour-Sergeant, No. E Company,

“Donnybrook Fusiliers.”

CHAPTER XXX

JOE WHELAN with empty pockets, an idle, discontented, corner boy—picking up scant employment, and scantier drinks, soon made his condition react upon his ladylove.

Lucy's little sharp face, began to look white and haggard, her temper was inflammable, as tinder, her tongue two-edged, and her whole expression denoted worry. She stayed herself all day long, with cups of ink-black tea (taken from a supply kept stewing on the kitchen hob), but even tea—to a woman the panacea of so many ills—had lost its virtue, and she was compelled to fall back on the drawing-room decanter.

Joe, the rascal, had absorbed his *fiancée's* last penny—he had got into some mysterious trouble over a pawn ticket, and was now meditating a move to Liverpool, where work was plenty, and he was personally unknown to the police.

In answer to Miss Cullen's soothing endearments, or agonised expostulations, he had simply said,

"I'm awful hard up for ten pounds, Lucy, me girl—give me ten pounds, me own little darlin', and I'll marry you the next day. Come now, I can't say fairer nor that! And I must have the coin by Friday week—or I'm off."

Where could Lucy lay hands on ten pounds, since Joe had appropriated every penny of her earnings? Her sister was never one to lend—or advance,—being on the contrary a borrower herself with no memory for short loans, and always just "out of change." She felt desperate—desperate, as she paced about her little garret, for half the night—burning her sister's gas too! She shrank from downright robbery and thieving, though her sensitiveness, was already blunted—having succumbed to small temptations in the shape of choice gloves and handkerchiefs, silk stockings—and once a beautiful new umbrella, which she hid under her mattress, and subsequently sold for seven-and-sixpence, assuring the disconsolate owner, that someone had just turned the door-handle, and stolen it out of the hall!—which statement, minus the turning of the handle, was perfectly correct. But here was an occasion, when a mere umbrella was of no avail, and her thoughts wandered round and round, and finally settled down on Miss Fergus' old

family silver, relics kept in a brass nailed box in her room—and never looked at from year's end to year's end. There was also the rose diamond brooch—a miniature set in large pearls—and an Indian gold chain and rings, all in the red morocco workbox, which stood on the top shelf of her wardrobe.

The silver in the black trunk, the jewellery in the red morocco workbox, were the poor remnant of the Rathmore plate, and diamonds—for which the Ferguses of Rathmore had once been renowned. When the family fortunes which it had taken centuries to establish, declined in a few spendthrift years, and there was a sheriff's sale at the Hall, the pictures, statues, plate and jewels went to the hammer, and were scattered all over the land. To a small spar of wreckage, Miss Fergus had clung with frantic tenacity—a little silver, a ring and a brooch or two, and a few old books. Poor as she was—even in her most desperate moments, she never dreamt of parting with these relics. She would as soon have contemplated selling the family vault! They were there, intact, to be passed on at her death to a grand-niece, who lived a poor hard life, on a ranch in Manitoba. The articles were shrunken and scanty in number, but represented a sacred sentiment. In short they repre-

sented the pitiful romance of the glories of a great house.

They were the Fergus heirlooms.

It was of these cherished heirlooms, that Lucy, the civil and flattering, was thinking, as she marched about her bower. Indeed the wicked girl had already laid her plans. The silver was easily shifted, when Miss Fergus went into the front room for the day. She would put the teapot in a bag, it was all embossed and had a coat-of-arms on it—and take it to Mrs. McNab, a friend of hers, and tell her the old lady give it to her, and ask her to buy it off her? Mrs. McNab, was such a quiet decent woman, she could sell it *well*; it was true, that she had a son—who had got five years for housebreaking, and Annie Flynn would not be seen speaking to the likes of her. Well, anyhow, *she* had no pride about her, and every family had its bad egg, and Mrs. McNab in her good sealskin coat, looked quite the lady.

Still it was with considerable trepidation, that Lucy carried out her scheme, although she had no fear of being disturbed. Johanna was busy washing out the kitchen, and would not be up to do the room, for a good hour. The old black box, with its brass nails, was easily opened with its own key. Lucy took

everything out, and examined them carefully. Tea-pot, coffee-pot, cream-ewer, and sugar-bowl, salvers, cake-basket, funny two-pronged silver forks, and heavy gravy-spoons. All these, and many other things, were copper colour from neglect and disuse—but every article was of solid old Irish silver.

After some reflection, she finally selected the tea-pot, as the most probable present made to her, for nursing the old lady through a bad attack of bronchitis. Yes, it all sounded plausible enough, as she repeated her story that same evening to Mrs. McNab, in her little dingy sanctum, in a slum near the Liberties.

(Mrs. McNab's sanctum could have imparted many a strange tale, had the walls tongues, as well as ears.) She was a stout, clever-looking woman, with piercing dark eyes, a large pale face, and an unctuous manner, and invariably wore a black bonnet, and a pair of enormous gold earrings.

"Oh, aye, me dear!" examining the article with the eye of a connoisseur, "it's a fine wedding present, and worth money (to a London dealer about thirty-five pounds; being of a rare and very marketable quality).

"I wonder now, me girl, as ye wouldn't keep it for yerself,—an heirloom?"

"Arrah, don't be humbugging me, Mrs. McNab, dear," cried Lucy rather hysterically, "sure what would I be doing with an heirloom——? a Britannia metal is more to my taste, and I want the ready money for me trousseau. I'm getting an elegant white silk, made up at Kennedy's."

"Oh, are ye so, dear, and who is the gentleman?"

"I can't be telling ye too much, all at wance," rejoined Lucy with a nervous laugh, "and now, Mrs. McNab, dear, what about the taypot?"

"Yes, it's almighty old," she said, "and discoloured, but I'll buy it off ye meself," and going to a drawer, and producing two sovereigns, "here you are, me beauty!"

"What's them for?" asked Lucy, standing back a step.

"The taypot, and what else?"

"Oh, go on wid yer nonsense! Is it two sovereigns, for that weight of solid silver? Why to lift it would make your arm ache!"

"Two sovereigns, me dear, and——" Mrs. McNab lowered her voice significantly—"no questions asked!"

"What are ye talking about at all, woman?" cried Lucy, scarlet with apprehension, and rage. "Giv' it back here, and I'll take it meself to Waterhouse or West's. 'Tis them as knows old Irish silver when they see it. Miss Fergus giv' out, it was worth forty pounds."

"And she went, and giv' it to *you*! Come now, darlin', talk sense!" Then with an alarming change of manner, and a ferocious glare, "Thunder and fury! do ye think I'm a born fool, me girl?"

"I think yer a born bullyrag!" retorted Lucy with a flash of unexpected courage.

"If ye were to walk into Waterhouse, and show them that taypot, with all them scrolls and arms on it, did ye think they's buy it, straight off, as if it were a pound of butter? They'd just sluther ye into a back parlour, and send for a policeman, and he'd ask ye some queer questions as ye might find awkward, —even if the ould wan *did* giv' it."

Lucy's colour faded from her lips, for Mrs. McNab's black eyes had been intolerably insolent. She put out her hand to lay hold of the teapot. Stealing was not half so easy as she thought. She must put the teapot back in the brass-bound trunk, where she

found it, and say nothing to nobody—only Mrs. McNab suspected her intention.

“See now, what I’ll do for ye, me dear?” resumed that lady in her most dulcet key, “I’ll giv’ yer seven sovereigns down in your own hand, and no risk or annoyance, and no questions asked.”

“Oh, Mrs. McNab, could not ye make it *ten*?” she pleaded in a tremulous voice. (Yes, ten, and Joe would marry her on Thursday.)

“No, dear, I really couldn’t. Here now is the money—hold on to it lest I change my mind. I’m taking a good deal of responsibility, and seven pounds is a sight of gold. Here”—and she counted the sovereigns into Lucy’s hot palm, and with a business-like celerity locked up the teapot. She knew where she could dispose of it in London, and in that little interval of a quarter of an hour, she had made twenty pounds.

“See, Lucy, me girl,” she resumed, as she rose and followed her into the dark entry, “if Miss Fergus gives ye any more nice wedding presents, me darlin’, ye will know where to bring them. Ye will get good money in gold, and no trouble or anxiety of any sort or kind—you mind that!”

"Oh, I'm not likely to get anything else," muttered Lucy, who was entirely dominated by the other woman—the daughter, wife, and mother of thieves.

"Maybe she'll offer ye a couple of candlesticks, or a pair of snuffers, or even a few forks. Sure I needn't tell ye they are no use at all to her. I wouldn't put it past her—after her giving ye the taypot." This remark was accompanied by a slow wink.

"Oh, indeed, maybe she might! She has a power of old silver," admitted garrulous foolish Lucy, frightened by the other woman's discernment and cravenly desirous of her favour. Mrs. McNab pricked up her ears. "And some queer two-pronged forks."

"I'd like to see them, me girl, and if ye get them, I'll giv' ye ten shillings apiece. They are awkward for atin', but some fancies them! Good night, darlin', ye'll bear me in mind," she called after the little figure that hurried up the entry with guilty alacrity.

This visit was but the forerunner of several, for Joe having received the seven sovereigns with effusion, and thanks, a true son of the horse leech, still wanted more. Lucy could not resist his

blandishments, for she was really attached to this dark-eyed devil-may-care rake. And as a natural consequence a pair of candlesticks, the forks, and finally a rose diamond brooch, and a miniature, gradually found their way into Mrs. McNab's keeping, and the proceeds went in betting on the Curragh races, in drink, in feathered hats, and in preparation of Lucy's wedding. Crafty Joe had more than a suspicion, that there was something "not all right" about the money, that now flowed so freely from his Lucy's purse. First of all seven pounds—then four—then three—lastly ten! Why the girl was worth her weight in gold—and he would marry her now without a scruple!

Of course she told him magnificent lies, as to how an uncle in America had sent her over the price of a watch, and sealskin coat; but as long as the money was there, Joe, the easy-going, was not particular as to how it was obtained.

CHAPTER XXXI

OCCASIONALLY the greatest spirits are laid low, and compelled to succumb to one or other of the ills, to which flesh is heir. Mrs. McNab became a prey to the "Flue" fiend, who seized her, and flung her upon a bed of sickness, where she languished for a considerable time, powerless and prostrate. The poor woman was unable to interview any of her anxious clients; and suspiciously cheap bargains, and the most "cruel" sacrifices, were turned away from her door, with heartless indifference. Perhaps it was due to the natural disappointment of an old customer—perhaps to the indiscretion of a new one—perhaps they had to thank their own brilliant intelligence—but it is a fact, that the police, who had long had their eye on Mrs. McNab, suddenly paid her an unexpected, and disagreeable visit.

These unusual callers were provided with a search warrant, instead of a nice little white pasteboard

card, and they proceeded to uproot the contents of the establishment with true masculine brutality. The house was dingy, dirty and dark, and yielded piles of dusty rubbish—but no crested silver. Crested silver in such a locality was dangerous as an explosive, and had been all promptly shipped to London, but in turning out musty drawers, blue mouldy cupboards and boxes, the searchers happened to light upon several articles that had long been wanted.

There was Mrs. O'Moore's point d'Alençon flounce—Sir Desmond Grady's enamel snuff box—and sufficient umbrellas, muffs, and boas, to stock a respectable shop.

Among other astounding discoveries, the officers of the law found a handsome rose diamond brooch, and a miniature set in large pearls; on the back of this was inscribed, "Honora Fergus, 1738." Honora was a pretty young woman with powdered hair, and mischievous dark eyes, and her granddaughter was presently traced to No. 9, Sherlock Terrace.

* * * * *

Lucy's face became whiter than her apron (though this is not a serious comparison) when she opened the hall door to the two stolid policemen. They

looked so enormous, and so important, they seemed to fill up the entire steps, area, and front garden. One of them was the constable who had fallen a victim to Johanna's beautiful grey eyes when she had come first to the Terrace—but her eyes had never smiled upon *him*, which fact still rankled in his breast.

The sergeant of police, a burly, grim-faced individual, with boots nearly as large as coal-boxes, asked to speak to Mrs. Flynn, in a tone that struck terror into the heart of her unhappy sister. Both sergeant and constable remained closeted with the mistress of the house, whilst Lucy ran about making hasty arrangements, both upstairs and downstairs and in Johanna's chamber. When the interview was concluded, the men emerged from the parlour, followed by Mrs. Flynn in a condition of violent agitation. The sergeant now expressed his intention of making a call on Miss Fergus.

The old lady, who was absorbed in the daily paper, was not a little startled by the visit, and exclaimed with amazement, when the officer deliberately produced, and displayed, her grandmother's picture, and her mother's best brooch.

"How in the name of fortune had he got hold of them?" she demanded, in a shaky treble.

"They were found in the house of a notorious receiver of stolen goods, ma'am," replied the sergeant, "and we have reason to believe were taken by the girl who generally waits on you. I understand that two have access to your rooms—one of them is the thief. Now which do you suspect?"

"Why, neither of them! Johanna makes up my room, and waits on me, and is as honest as the sun," protested her friend, "and as for Lucy, why—well—she's Mrs. Flynn's own sister. They are both most respectable girls."

"Oh, most respectable, no doubt, ma'am," sneered her visitor. "Now we want to ascertain if you have lost any more property—such as silver plate—or lace?"

The black box was duly opened despite its owner's shrill disapproval, and alas! alas! the family teapot, a salver, and the treasured two-pronged forks, were missing.

The poor old lady could do nothing but hold up her hands and wring them, and ejaculate, and re-iterate in pitiable helplessness—

"Well to be sure! Well to be sure!"

"Now, *I'd* like to make sure of the party," said Sergeant Todd, with a facetious grin; "I have a search warrant here, and we intend to turn out the boxes of these young women."

Then the two men clumped heavily upstairs to Lucy's chamber, conducted by Mrs. Flynn, protesting vociferously all the time, with a red spot on either cheek.

Lucy's room proved scrupulously innocent of stolen property, but for a display of dust, tawdry finery, rags, candle ends, and general squalor, its appearance would have been difficult to surpass—even in the slums. Mrs. Flynn, who never penetrated to this region, was actually both shocked and ashamed, though her condition of virtuous indignation, left little room in her breast for other emotions.

From the top of the house, the police solemnly pounded down to the den of pale Johanna. She stood as if turned into a figure of stone, whilst her would-be admirer, Constable Kellett, ransacked her den, contemptuously turned out an old wine case containing her neat but scanty wardrobe, and laid jealous hands on the sacred photograph of Shamus!

So this great, quiet slip of a girl had a soldier's picture in her room—yes, and a real gold brooch. As he straightened himself, and confronted her, angry significance lurked in his eye.

And what was this paper parcel under the flock mattress?

Six rat-tailed spoons, no less! and an emerald ring tied up in a corner of the bed sheet. So here was the thief! and a clumsy thief too.

The curious part of the business was, that no one appeared to be half as much surprised as the girl herself! She stood mute and ghastly, surveying the missing articles with a frozen stare. All the blood seemed to be drawn from her body. For a moment she remained speechless—then burst into a torrent of indignant repudiation in the Irish tongue. But none of the people she addressed understood a single word of what she said. They were amazed that a girl usually so silent, could now talk so emphatically and rapidly—as much surprised as to discover that the handsome, black-browed Kerry girl, was no more or less than a common criminal.

Sergeant Murphy was about to march her away to the police-station then and there, but for Miss

Fergus, who had hurried downstairs at the first hint of the news, and in floods of tears, and extreme agitation flatly refused to charge her.

"If it comes to taking Johanna to jail, I'd sooner go *myself*," she announced in a tone shrill with passion. "I'll never be responsible for ruining any young creature. There is some fairy work about this! Johanna is no thief."

For sole reply, the sergeant held up the spoons and ring, whilst Johanna continued to protest in broken sobs, and unintelligible Irish.

"Well, mind now, if you charge her, I'll say I *gave* them to her. See here, I give them to you, Johanna," screamed the old lady. "Do you hear me, me girl, I'm your friend—no Fergus goes back on anyone, that is their friend—I'll——" Here her unusual exertion, and emotion, overcame the poor old lady, and she fainted away.

The police, with a word of caution, reluctantly left Johanna behind them, but she had still to deal with Mrs. Flynn, who figuratively fell upon her, sword in hand.

Mrs. Flynn was maddened to frenzy, when she thought of "the crow" her neighbours would have

over her, and her grand servant!—neighbours, who whatever their inferiority, had never had in, the police! Even now, she was aware that there was a crowd outside the railings, and that Nos. 13 and 11 were standing out, talking excitedly, upon their several doorsteps.

“It all came of taking in a tramp girl with no character,” she screeched, filled with an irresistible impulse to gore and trample, “and I might have known that ‘still waters run deep’ and thieves make the best servants. *Now*, I know, the way Miss Long’s umbrella went and Mrs. Watts’s handkerchiefs, and Mrs. Kane’s whisky! Did anyone ever know the like! Pack your duds this minute and go,” she bawled, “I’d like the neighbours to see that I don’t keep a thief in my house.”

Johanna struggled to speak, but her efforts were in vain—the thunderbolt had been too much for her poor senses. She could not recall one single word of English.

In silence, she stumbled into her room, collected her clothes and made them into a bundle, and put Shamus’ picture and brooch inside the body of her gown. She threw off her cap and apron—the badge

of her servitude—took her cloak over her arm, and was ready.

“Oh, mamma, mamma,” cried the two fat children as they tore into the hall just back from school, “what’s the matter—it’s not Johanna that’s going?”

“Yes it is, and this very minute,” rejoined their parent in her shrill far-reaching voice. “The common low drab of a thing, that’s after destroying me house—and its good character. She’s been and stolen stacks of things.”

“’Twasn’t she,” cried Katty, the eldest. “Sure it’s Lucy that takes the whisky, and the cake,” and she turned, and clung tightly round Johanna, who was descending the steps, with her head held high, her bundle in her hand.

“So she was to be let off—and turned off” it appeared to the eagerly watching crowd. And she held her head up, and put a mighty bold face upon it, and there was no denying, that the Flynn children were fond of the girl, for they cried and bawled, when she turned away and went quickly down the road. Johanna was not the same individual who had come to Dublin nearly two years previously; hale, active, and fresh-coloured. She was strong,

thanks to her native air, good milk and oatmeal, but these long months of scanty food, and hard labour, had altered her sorely, her mind was enfeebled, her wits were weakened by her fall. Otherwise she would never have walked off without her wages, and gone down penniless and friendless into the city.

* * * * *

All the way along Sherlock Road, in spite of their "mamma," the two fat little Flynns, panted after the outcast, calling, "Johanna, Johanna, can't ye come back, Johanna!"

CHAPTER XXXII

WHEN the first fury of Mrs. Flynn's wrath had abated, and she had time to cool, and brag that "*she* was not long in throwing a thief out of her house!" the good woman remembered, that she had not paid the girl her wages, and that, as far as she knew, the creature who, when all was said and done, certainly "wanted a day in the week," had left her situation in a destitute condition. Johanna Daly was minus the money sense. When she had stolen from home, she had abandoned the greater part of her earnings—left them in her father's hungry clutches. Now, after many months' continuous labour, she had been flung out into the world, leaving every shilling of her earnings, with her ruthless employer.

Miss Fergus, having recovered from her faint—or "weak turn" as she called it,—rang for Mrs. Flynn, and proceeded to cross-examine her sharply.

"Where was the girl Johanna?"

"Oh"—afraid to tell the truth—"she was all right."

"Well, then, send her to me, for I want to see her."

Mrs. Flynn was searching her active brain—ever fertile in excuse—when one of her children, who had edged into the room in her wake, raised a dirty, tear-stained face to Miss Fergus, and whimpered :

“Sure, ye can’t see Johanna no more,” and before her mother could pounce on her and thrust her forth, added :

“Me mamma has got shut of her : she’s gone !” and the child concluded the sorrowful news, with a heart-rending howl.

“You turned her out ?” cried the old lady indignantly.

“Well, then, I did, Miss Fergus, and I’ll tell you no lie about it. I don’t want no thieves—and I just put her across the door.”

“A poor simple innocent, without a friend in Dublin—well to be sure ! well to be sure ! Then see now, Mrs. Flynn, ye will find her, and fetch her back, at once, or you can put me across the door, too.”

Mrs. Flynn glared, and endeavoured to speak—was Johanna to rob her not only of her good name, but of yet another lodger ? And she knew right well that No. 11, was just aching to get the likes of Miss Fergus ! No trouble, money on the nail, and a real lady.

“You had better see about finding her at once,

Mrs. Flynn," resumed old Miss Fergus ; with a touch of unexpected dignity, and a wave of a shrivelled hand, she added, " You can go."

Mrs. Flynn slunk into her parlour, brewed a cup of tea, and set to work to do some hard thinking. How could a girl of no education, be up to stealing rings, and brooches, and spoons? What good would they be to her? She spent no money, and never stirred out, except on a small message, or to chapel. She seemed to lay no store by clothes, or gewgaws, and—as if suddenly struck by a blow—"Where in the name of creation, did Lucy get hold of all her new finery? Was it likely that a good-for-nothing rascal like Joe Whelan would buy her a grand black satin dress—as well as a hat, out of Grafton Street?"

Lucy had been awfully white, and shaky, these times, and constantly running out of an evening to see a friend ; and once she had met her in the passage with a queer-shaped little parcel in her hand—"only a shoe" she explained, going to get the heel mended. And once—memory spurred to extraordinary exertions—she had seen her coming out of Miss Fergus's room looking terribly flustered. Mrs. Flynn sat up, convinced that her sister Lucy was the guilty one, and the poor simple Kerry girl, was as innocent as a lamb.

Where was she now, that same innocent lamb?—wandering about the Dublin streets like some lost animal, without a hole to put her head in?

Mrs. Flynn rose to her feet, her little sharp face drawn and twitching—if anything happened to the unfortunate creature, she, Annie Flynn, would have a hand in her death. Who was she to appeal to?—how was she to trace the girl? Whatever she did, she must do quickly—she would take right good care, that there were no more police mixed up in her business. And where was Lucy all this time? Oh, wait till she got hold of her, and put her through her facings! At that particular moment, Lucy happened to be securely locked into her room, packing her finery, wrestling with straps, and counting over her capital. She took a piece of newspaper out of a chink at the back of the grate, and reckoned—nine sovereigns, seven shillings and three half-pence. Miss Cullen had come to the conclusion, that the sooner she put the water between the city of Dublin and herself the better. She completed her packing, dressed herself, then listened on the landing, to discover the whereabouts of her sister. To her immense relief, she heard her leave the house, closing the front door with a furious slam. She had gone to confer

with a friend who lived round the corner. As soon as she saw her off the premises, Lucy flew downstairs, hailed a four-wheeler, helped the man with her box, and whilst he was carrying it to the cab, she darted into Mrs. Flynn's room—and on the principle that she might as well be hanged for a sheep, as a lamb, snatched up her sister's gold watch and chain, and put them in her pocket. Such was Miss Lucy's energy and despatch, that in five minutes' time, she had left No. 9 behind her, and for ever.

The bride-elect spent the night at a friend's house. The next day, she and Joe were married before the registrar, and took the afternoon boat for Liverpool. That merchant city has opened her arms to many strangers, of all countries, and of all degrees, but she has rarely received a more utterly worthless couple, than Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Whelan.

* * * * *

Mrs. Flynn's conference lasted a full hour—she had so much to say respecting the recent business. By slow degrees, at a great length, she had related her own share in the affair—her opinion of Miss Fergus, Johanna, and Lucy—and awaited at long last her friend's advice.

Her friend recommended her "to look for Johanna at once, and to get shot of Lucy—if she could." Charged with this verdict, Mrs. Flynn hurried home, to discover that Lucy had relieved her of the trouble of "getting shot of her" and had moreover carried off, as a souvenir, her own beautiful gold watch and chain—her badge of position, and chief pride!

The children were hungry, the kitchen fire was extinct, Miss Fergus dragged at her bell in vain, and there was her unhappy landlady with the whole weight of No. 9 upon her skinny shoulders! Lucy and Johanna both gone within an hour, and she—the lady of the house—had to set to work to light fires, carry coals, and answer bells. Mrs. Flynn had not found herself in such a quandary for many years. Fury, shame, and bodily fatigue, drove her anxieties and good resolutions respecting Johanna clean out of her head. If she did think of the girl at all—her mind being engaged with Lucy, and her treachery—it was merely to tell herself, that after all, the creature was in a Christian country, she had a tongue in her head, and she must just do as her betters did—take her chance!

CHAPTER XXXIII

AND now to follow Johanna, who had walked off rapidly, deaf and dumb to the children's entreaties. She pushed her way steadily among the crowds on the footpath, as if she had some important engagement to keep. Her manner was so strange, her face so white and set, that one or two pedestrians paused to stare after the bare-headed country girl, carrying a cloak, and a bundle. It was not this alone that arrested their attention, it was the expression of agonised resolution in her deep-set eyes. She looked like a woman who was going out of her mind—that would think little of destroying herself. Had she no friends? Whereabouts were the police? After all, these good Levites turned about, and went their ways, it was not their business to interfere with, or follow, the likes of that one!

It was perfectly true that Johanna's brain was reeling, and she felt, as she appeared—light-headed. She had not tasted a morsel of food since eight o'clock

that morning, when she had partaken of her usual frugal breakfast of weak tea, and bread and dripping. She was now,—although she did not realise the fact,—faint with hunger; her head felt empty and dizzy. Want of food, and this latest and heaviest shock of misfortune, had all but hurled her reason from its seat.

After aimlessly tramping the streets for hours, her knees seemed to give way—her feet could carry her no further, and seeing an open door close by, Johanna crept inside, as does some worn-out creature to a lair in the jungle—and found that she was in a chapel.

Where better could she be? The exhausted wanderer staggered to a seat, where she collapsed in a state of stupor, utterly prostrated by emotion and fatigue. So motionless did she remain, that she was unobserved amidst the shades of an April evening; when the sacristan came with the keys, the quiet figure totally escaped his notice, and Johanna was locked up for the night.

After some time, the girl roused herself, and realised her surroundings. The moon shone brilliantly through two pierced windows, high above the chancel; and she dragged herself to the foot of the altar, and there on her knees poured forth prayers, and agonised

lamentations in her native tongue. Her supplications were in this wise—

“Oh, Holy St. John, and the Blessed Saints, look on me here, and what I am. They say all our troubles will be made up to us, in another world, and won't you have pity on me, and take me now? Sure, I'm doing no good here, and haven't I lost my home and my friends, and Shamus, and my character, and what have I got to lose except my life?

“Oh, Blessed Mother and Holy Angels, there is no place for the likes of me in this world, and wouldn't ye take me out of it, and give me a small, small corner in heaven, where I'll serve you day and night?”

Quite gradually from a kneeling posture, Johanna sank forward, overwhelmed by fatigue and sleep; all night long, she lay a prone and motionless figure at the foot of the high altar. Her dreams were vivid, impressive, and consoling. They were dominated by one face—the face of Shamus. In all her visions, and through a series of extraordinarily beautiful scenes—with a background of Kerry mountains,—the face that ran through them—as the air through music—was the face of her lover, ever coming and going, and passing and returning, but never once speaking to her. So they were both dead, and in heaven; and the assur-

ance of this fact, afforded her ecstatic rapture, and relief.

From such enchanting and happy dreams Johanna awoke, and by degrees, began sadly to comprehend how far she was from the fulfilment of her visions. She was lying, cold, stiff and cramped, upon the stone flags of a chapel. Presently she bound up her mane of loosened hair, and knelt down, and said her prayers. As she rose to her feet, she made up her mind, to set her face towards home—yes, within the very same hour. Surely some witch's spell had kept her fast in Dublin all this time! What had ailed her not to go away? (The sole spell was Mrs. Flynn's strong will, Lucy's treachery, and her own yielding nature.)

Well, she was free now. Free! The night in chapel had broken the enchantment! The Saints had delivered her—Mary would surely receive her—although her letters had been scarce and strange; and now that she was well experienced in working, she would get a situation at one of the fishing inns no doubt.

It may appear, that Johanna Daly was too confiding and simple for this clever, selfish world—it was true. If all the recesses of her mind had been

searched, they would be searched in vain, for one dark little thought, that sniggered and whispered and called itself "Suspicion." She never imagined, that she had been kept at Sherlock Terrace solely to forward the interests of Mrs. Flynn, and to indulge Lucy in idleness. The poor creature was merely a stupid, ignorant woman, who never dreamt of evil, till evil came, and laid a heavy hand on her and hurt her sorely. She struggled through life according to her lights, she was sober, honest and pious; her intelligence was not brilliant—but her heart was pure. In the overwhelming events of the previous day her poor little, ill-trimmed lamp, had nearly been extinguished altogether.

* * * * *

Johanna had a few coppers in her pocket, and a one-pound note in a little green bag, which she wore suspended from her neck. With these pence, she bought a glass of milk, and a loaf of bread, part of which she devoured like some famished animal, the remainder she bestowed upon a lost and starving dog. Feeling rested, and much refreshed, she set off with a light heart to King's Bridge Station. She well remembered the locality, and the name. Once there,

when she had taken her ticket she would feel herself half-way home. It was now nine o'clock, and if she had luck, she would be in Kerry by sundown! Her heart leaped at the prospect! She would walk over the mountains to Mary, and maybe find a letter at the Cross. These wonted hopes lent wings to her feet.

"There's no train whatever to Kerry before twelve o'clock, my good girl, so you must wait," said the clerk at the ticket office.

As waiting was a trial which had become as second nature to his listener, she humbly withdrew, and took a seat in a retired corner, where she remained watching the incoming, and outgoing trains, with the unaffected interest of a child. Not a few people noticed Johanna, for Hope, the ever-flattering, is a wonderful restorative. Once more, there was a tinge of colour in her face, and a light burned within her glorious grey eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AT last the hands of the big round clock pointed to twelve; a long line of carriages was slowly shunted into the station—the train for the south—and the patient traveller rose from her place, and walked over to the ticket office. As the window was shut fast, she rapped on it timidly, with her knuckles.

It was instantly thrown up, and the clerk looked out——

“Well, what is it?” he asked. “What a hurry you are in! It’s not time to issue the tickets, yet.”

“Couldn’t you giv’ me the ticket now, sir, av you please,” pleaded the girl, “for I’m in an awful hurry home?”

“Where to?”

“Boher, third class.”

“Single?”

Johanna nodded.

“You won’t be long so, I expect!” remarked the young man, as gazing through his little spy-hole, he

contemplated her beautiful eager face. He was moved,—as are most young men,—by a pair of exquisite appealing eyes, fringed by sweeping black lashes, and he went and gave the machine a jerk, returned, and thrust the ticket through the window, saying,

“Here you are—eleven and ninepence.”

Meanwhile Johanna was fumbling with a little silk bag. She felt it incredulously, then fearfully—she put her fingers inside—she took it off, and turned it inside out—but it was empty. Then, in a flash, she remembered that she had lent the money to Mrs. Flynn, and the fact had fled from her memory. It seemed as if Fate would never exhaust the shafts of ill-fortune; the girl's knees shook, her face became colourless, she endeavoured to speak—her lips moved but no sound issued from them. At last she said in a strangled voice,

“Sure, I've no money!”

The clerk stared at the empty purse, and then at her—and whistled.

“Sure, I thought I had a pound note here,” she stammered, “but I lent it. And now what will I do at all?”

“Have ye nothing whatever, me girl?”

"I've this good cloak," was the unexpected answer. "It belonged to my mother, and cost five pounds, and has a power of wear in it still! See!" holding it towards him—"try the feel of it, it's fine and heavy. Wouldn't ye take it, and give me the little weenchie bit of pasteboard instead?"

The young man burst into a roar of laughter, and as soon as he had recovered his gravity, he said,

"The Company don't do business in old clothes. Will ye just tell me, what would be the use of an old cape, to us?"

"Faix, *you* know best," rejoined the bargainer unabashed. "A girl from our part, left a cloak in the train—and I tell you this for God's truth—she never heard of it again, though she asked for it till she was heartbroke. The Company *kep* it, you see."

It was a pure waste of time to argue with this crazy creature. She had a pair of wonderful eyes in her head, but she was a poor idiot. The clerk swept away the bit of green cardboard—the price of Johanna's happiness, and ruthlessly shut down the window; and the wretched girl having resumed her rejected offering, turned away with a mixture of a sigh, and a groan.

Miserable Johanna was not bright, only honest,

faithful, and beautiful. She was as far removed from the self-reliant, bustling city girl, as if they were the inhabitants of different planets. She lacked the Celtic quick wit, her ideas travelled slowly, and she had no mental resource. It never occurred to her, to go to a priest, to beg for alms, or to pawn her cloak, to send a telegram.

She was altogether too dull for her generation. She went and stood against a door-post, and watched with agonised eyes, the train for the south fill up—the doors were slammed, the whistle sounded—yes, with a scream of defiance, it was gone—and she remained behind.

Johanna was surely in the clutches of a capricious destiny—the poor creature was weary of the struggle. Once more, her mind wandered away to water, and death. There was the Liffey river. Oh, *no*—and she shuddered involuntarily—*not* where it ran under the bridges, and by the quays, but away in the quiet April country, where the banks were green, and the water was as clear as crystal—if she made haste, she would reach such a spot by sundown, then she would say her prayers, and go to sleep. No one would miss her, not even Mary, for Mary's letters had become so strange,—and so scarce.

* * * * *

Mrs. Thurloe was the pretty Irish wife of Major Thurloe of the Duke's Dragoons, then quartered in barracks. She and her young sister-in-law had just been seeing a friend off, and were about to leave the station. As Mrs. Thurloe turned, she caught sight of Johanna, stopped abruptly, and exclaimed—

“Enid, there is that girl again! look, near the weighing machine. She was here this morning, when I came down to the bookstall,—and she is here still. She looks dreadfully ill, and unhappy, as if she had lost everything in the world. I'll go, and speak to her.”

The warm-hearted lady was as good as her word. In another moment, she had accosted the stranger.

“I am afraid you are in some difficulty,” she began. Johanna turned her sad eyes on the charming bright face. “Have you missed your train?”

After a long pause, the answer came in a husky whisper—

“Yes, your ladyship, I have.”

“Are you waiting for someone?”

“No, miss, God knows I wish I was; but I'd a notion that with so many coming and going, I might chance to see someone from Kerry.”

“Well, *I'm* from Kerry,” returned the lady, “al-

though you have never seen me before. I was born and bred under the Reeks. Come, I'm sure you are in some difficulty—what is it? Do tell me."

"Oh, I'd be ashamed to trouble a lady like yourself," rejoined the girl faintly, but long-repressed tears fell from her eyes, and splashed upon her cloak.

"Come, follow me into the waiting-room, and let me hear all about it," urged the other Kerry woman; and Johanna, without further resistance, walked after the strange ladies, into the first-class waiting-room, which by great good fortune they found empty. A few kind words, a sentence in Irish, and Johanna's reserve melted away like snow, under the sun.

Enid Thurloe was a London girl, lately grown up, and now paying her first visit to Ireland. Many things and many people astonished her. It was a strange country, with curious customs. She looked on bewildered, as her sister-in-law accosted, and carried off this weeping woman. Clodagh Thurloe was a fiery impulsive Celt, of a totally different nature to stupid, slow, Johanna Daly.

There they sat facing one another—the charming, brilliant, Clodagh, with her soft French gown, her feathered hat, her chains, and dainty little trinkets, her hair fashionably dressed, her clothes suggesting

violets—and her vis-à-vis, was this gaunt, but handsome creature, with her bare head, her great tragic eyes, and her poor, toil-worn hands.

But yet the two were united by a common birth-place, and a common tongue. They seemed so absorbed in one another, as almost to have forgotten the presence of a third person.

“But speak English,” said Mrs. Thurloe suddenly, “my sister does not understand the Irish. Enid, do come and sit here, and Johanna Daly will tell us her story.”

At first, in a few laboured sentences, and then in a torrent of broken English, the wanderer gradually unfolded her tale. She told of her departure from home, her loss of address, the silence of her friends. She spoke of “her boy,” who might be in the war, and dead for all she knew; finally, of the robbery, and her terrible disgrace.

“You are too trusting for this world, Johanna,” exclaimed Mrs. Thurloe; “I know well, that the Kerry people are very quiet, and terribly soft—what do you say?”

“Axin your pardon, my lady, I think it was all because I lived too long hid away at the end of a boreen, and everyone has forgotten me, and, may

God forgive me for saying it, but the Saints themselves have overlooked me."

"It is a long lane that has no turning," declared her new friend, "and I'm going to give your lane a twist. There is no train this afternoon, and you will have to come home with me, and rest yourself for a day or two, and then make a fresh start. I will pay for your ticket, Johanna."

"Oh, miss"—drawing a long breath.

"No, Mrs.—Mrs. Thurloe, and this is my sister-in-law, Miss Thurloe."

"Then, Mrs. Thurloe, may the heavens pour down every blessing on you, and I'll send you back the money for certain, sure."

"Certainly not. I wish to make you a little gift."

"Oh, my lady, if you only knew—it is all as one, as if you had given me—my life!"

"You shall come home with us now, and I will write a letter to your people, and tell them to expect you. I can take you in quite easily, for my maid is away, and you can have her room. I shall go myself, and interview your mistress, and receive your wages. Tell me how much does she owe you?"

"Two pounds, forby the one I lent her. But I misdoubt if your kindness will be of any use—she is terribly bitter against me!"

"Oh, we shall soon change that," replied Mrs. Thurloe, with easy confidence, rising as she spoke. "Now, come along, Johanna, the carriage is waiting outside, and I shall take you home."

Johanna began to think that she was dreaming, or again under some spell of enchantment, when she found herself seated in a real carriage, with two splendid horses, and two men driving, and was whirled out of the station, and carried at a spanking pace to a country house on the other side of the Phoenix Park.

CHAPTER XXXV

IT was a curious experience for Johanna Daly ; to be a welcome guest, in the house of gentlefolk. Good food, and kind words, restored the poor shattered creature in a marvellous manner. Before retiring for the night, she had a private interview with Mrs. Thurloe, in her boudoir ; the dazzling glories of which, almost took away the girl's breath. Her thoughtful friend had already written a real note to Mary, announcing her return for the next day but one. As she closed the envelope, she looked up, and said suddenly—

“Do you think Mary Nolan ever received your letters?”

“An' to be sure she did, your ladyship, fort hough I'm going through the world like a blind creature myself, because I can neither read or write, Mary is a grand scholar, and can read every size of print, and write well.”

“And who wrote the letters for you?”

"Lucy Cullen—at Mrs. Flynn's. I giv' her a shilling apiece for the trouble, and posted them myself."

"And what sort of a person is she?" questioned Mrs. Thurloe.

"Mighty smart, and quick; fond of dress and gadding, but not much work in her. Pleasant and gay sometimes, and sometimes terribly peevish—and black in herself."

"I suppose *you* did most of the work? and she would have been sorry if you went?"

"Faix, she would so," rejoined Johanna with unusual emphasis.

Mrs. Thurloe nodded her head sagaciously. *She* was quick-witted, if her protégée was dull, and she had drawn her own conclusion with respect to Miss Cullen.

"Have you any idea, or any suspicion, as to what kept you in Dublin all the time?" inquired Mrs. Thurloe.

"I'm not rightly sure, ma'am, but I think the fairies put a sort of spell on me—for I never seemed able to stir a foot, much as I wished to go! I was always aching to go home, but something held me—something had a strong holt of me."

"But you don't believe in fairies, and enchantments, Johanna?"

"Why not, ma'am? Sure ye know very well yerself, there's a power of fairy people in Kerry."

"But you have never *seen* one—why do you believe in them?"

"Well, ma'am, I've never seen our Blessed Lady, but I believe in her. May Heaven pardon me, if it's wrong to bring her into talk of *them*."

"Have you ever met anyone who has seen them?"

"Oh, yes, a good few. There was the mother of my friend Mary—she's dead this ten years. Before Mary was born, she had a little girlie that was most beautiful, as fair as a white flower, and she used to lie in her cot all day, and never cry. So people misdoubted, she was not long for this world. Sometimes of an evening, her mother heard someone speaking low to her in the room inside, and she would go in, but there was never no sign of anyone. But the child was always so gay, laughing, and smiling, and she asked her, what ailed her? and, she said, 'A beautiful lady sits and talks to me, and tells me stories.' 'Ah, it's just dreaming dreams, you are, me dear!' says she, 'go to sleep.' One night Mrs. Nolan was sitting up late, weaving, when she

was aware of someone singing by the cradle—oh, such a lovely mournful song, as she never heard before. She went in at once to the room, but found no one there, only the sweet singing was just fading away, going back up the mountains,—and the child was dead. The fairies had taken her.”

“Oh, Johanna!” and Mrs. Thurloe laughed, “that *is* a fairy tale! Now you must go to your bed and dream happy dreams. Good night.”

Worn out as was Johanna, she could hardly sleep for the unaccustomed splendour of her apartment—the wonderful roses on the wall-paper, the magnificent brass-mounted bed, the large looking-glass, and the beautiful jug and basin. It was all a thousand times too good, for the likes of her.

The following day, Mrs. Thurloe set off to Sherlock Terrace, sternly determined to beard Mrs. Flynn, and to cope with, and vanquish her single-handed. She was naturally of an adventurous disposition, and desired to see the house in which Johanna had slaved.

She left the girl in charge of her young sister-in-law, as she gallantly set forth alone. To Johanna, her present quarters were not merely a haven of repose, but Elysium itself. Under the guidance of the young English lady, she was taken through the rooms,

adorned with pictures, flowers, and art treasures, in a spirit of dumb and awe-struck admiration. Then they wandered into the gardens and greenhouses, where more wonders were revealed and explained. Here were the dogs,—and to meet them, seemed like the renewal of an ancient friendship. There was a red setter from Tralee, and his name was Kerry ; there was an Irish terrier, whose name was Pat, and they were both delighted to see her.

From the garden, they went into the stables, and finally—as the grand climax—Johanna was carried to visit the pigs—four flourishing boneens. The poor girl had not, so to speak, met a pig, since she had bidden a weeping farewell to her own curly-tailed darlings (long since departed this life, and turned into excellent breakfast bacon).

Major Thurloe in strolling back from the stables in uniform, excited Johanna's mute admiration. He was an officer in the horse soldiers, she was aware of that, and what a splendid fine gentleman !

For his part, he paused, when he encountered his pretty sister, and his wife's new protégée. It was so like Clodagh the impulsive, to bring home in her smart carriage, waifs and strays. One day she arrived with a calf with a broken leg, another time

a lost dog, and now, this forlorn, forsaken female. Unless his eyeglass grossly deceived him, this last find, was an extraordinarily handsome young woman—quite a regal personage—and might almost pose as Ireland's Uncrowned Queen! She presented a sharp contrast to his pretty, London-bred sister Enid. They might have been selected for two distinct types—the Irishwoman, Nature's lady; the English girl, the lady born; a carefully tended, graceful exotic. Mountain heather, and an exquisite orchid.

Mountain heather, hastened to drop him a respectful curtsy—a curtsy of the true old feudal pattern.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, "been looking round—what do you think of the garden?"

"It's just beautiful, your honour's lordship."

"Have you any brothers in the Service?" he continued, as his professional eye realised her fine physique and carriage, though her face was sharpened by illness and grief.

"I've no brothers anywhere," she replied. "I'm the only one in it."

"Oh, I see, and a host in yourself. Have you no relations in the army?"

"Well, not to say what you'd call a relation, sir,"—and she coloured vividly,—“but I've a boy in the Donnybrooks.”

"Indeed. The Donnybrooks have done splendidly in the war."

"Yes, sir, so they giv' out in the papers, but only some of them. The rest are in the Indies."

"Oh, no, they are all in South Africa, and wherever the fighting is going on, you may swear he is in it."

"I wouldn't doubt him. He was always too fond of fighting," she exclaimed in a tone of sombre conviction.

"Then he has had his fill of it now, I should say! Your boy will be coming back one of these days, covered with medals and glory. What's his name?"

"Shamus McCarthy, E Company."

"Is he a private, or a sergeant?"

"I couldn't tell you rightly, sir, but I don't think he is a private, as he was never close with his hand, or his tongue. I—I—believe he is striving to be an officer."

"Oh, is he? Well, I hope his efforts will be successful." And with this generous aspiration, Major Thurloe walked away to change his uniform for mufti:

Meanwhile Mrs. Thurloe was speeding on her errand as rapidly as a pair of three-quarter-bred horses could take her. It was not long before a

smart turn-out was standing before No. 9, Sherlock Terrace, and all Mrs. Flynn's detested rivals, were glaring, and glowering and swelling with envy, as they beheld a dapper groom in top-boots ascend her steps, and make an imperious assault upon the lucky lady's knocker.

Could it be anyone after her rooms? The collective mind of the Terrace reeled at such a possibility! Well, anyhow she had no servants—there was some small consolation in this fact.

And who was the grand young lady sitting in the carriage, behind a pair of blood horses? Could it be, that she had come to visit old Miss Fergus? With such a figure, and fashion, and grandeur, she might be one of the Castle folk!

After tedious delay, Mrs. Flynn, now her own handmaiden, opened the door, and stood transfixed.

"Can I see Mrs. Flynn?" inquired the distinguished stranger.

"If you will be pleased to step in, ma'am," replied the landlady, throwing wide the door as she spoke.

Mrs. Thurloe entered, and was instantly saluted by an odour of fried herrings, blended with an escape of gas. Two fat faces—despite their mother's signals—were defiantly peeping out, at the top of the kitchen stairs.

"What's your pleasure, ma'am?" resumed Mrs. Flynn, "is it the drawing-rooms?"

Well she knew, in her heart of hearts, that it could not possibly be the drawing-rooms. Was it likely, that this young lady, with her rustling skirts, and sables, was looking for lodgings in her house!

"No," replied Mrs. Thurloe sharply, "I came to inquire about a girl called Johanna Daly."

Mrs. Flynn's sharp face became red.

"If you will walk in," she said, now opening the door into her own frowsy sitting-room.

"Johanna Daly left this day before yesterday. You—no thanks, I won't sit down"—glancing distrustfully at a chair—"you—turned her out into the street?"

"Well then, miss, I'll tell you no falsehood, and I did."

"At a moment's notice, and penniless."

"That's her own fault, she never asked for her wages."

"Where do you suppose she is now?"

Mrs. Flynn's colour faded, and her lips twitched—her eyes asked an awful question.

"She is safe and well—no thanks to *you*. I have come to receive her wages—three pounds, I believe."

Mrs. Flynn gave a great gulp of relief. She was

cowed by her visitor's cool, authoritative manner, and stricken by a painful sense of her own shortcomings. Without a word, she went to an old desk, and produced three surprisingly dirty one-pound notes. These the visitor accepted, and hastily stuffed into her purse.

"Do you really believe, that the girl stole silver and jewellery?" she inquired.

"No, not now," rejoined Mrs. Flynn tremulously. "I'm sorry to say, it was the other one—Lucy—my own half-sister, that has brought the black shame on me. She made off out of the house as soon as she got my back turned, and I hear, she's away to Liverpool with that blackguard, Joe Whelan. If I'd a known where Johanna was, I'd have fetched her home with a heart and a half, for she was a real good servant, honest and hard-working, and never rambling. The children and Miss Fergus is fretting, and just lost without her. If you see Johanna, you may tell her from me, she can come back."

"I will give her your message, certainly, but don't you think you would be greatly surprised, if she ever returned to your service?"

Mrs. Flynn was silent.

"What was it? Six pounds a year, and the work

of a busy lodging-house. No holidays—no rest, from six in the morning till twelve at night. Do you suppose any sensible girl, would come back?”

Before Mrs. Flynn could answer this pointed question, one of the children burst into the room, screeching—

“Mamma, mamma! Miss Fergus is ringing her bell like mad. She wants you this instant.”

In answer to this summons, Mrs. Flynn hurried away, and left Mrs. Thurloe tête-à-tête with a glowering child, whose face was streaked with dirt and tears, and whose eyes boldly devoured her. In less than two minutes, Mrs. Flynn had returned, and said,

“If you please, ma’am, Miss Fergus sends her compliments, and will be obliged, if you will step in, and see her.”

CHAPTER XXXVI

AS Mrs. Thurloe had heard of Miss Fergus, she accepted the invitation with alacrity, and was soon standing in the dingy front sitting-room, raised from squalor, and the commonplace by a few well-bound books, some bits of old Sèvres, and Chelsea, three or four paintings, and a coloured print "The Children of Tipoo." In the window were two venerable plants, and on the table, sat a shabby grey cat, with a pinched and anxious countenance. An aged gentlewoman rose as the visitor entered, executed a stiff, old-fashioned curtsy, and said,

"I am greatly beholden to you, madam, for coming to see me. My name is Fergus—Fergus of Fedamore."

The name was perfectly familiar to Mrs. Thurloe, who bowed in acknowledgment.

"My present circumstances are a good deal straitened. I am, as you see, old, and nearly blind, but, thank God, I still preserve my faculties, and my

hearing. The children have told me, that you have called here, on behalf of Johanna Daly."

"Yes, she is with me now," replied the other. "My name is Thurloe. I noticed the girl at the railway station. She looked ill, wretched and lost. I took her home, when I found she was quite penniless and friendless."

"She shall not be friendless, as long as I live, and can speak for her," announced Miss Fergus, with decision.

"I am very glad to hear it, as she seems rather short of friends. I am a Kerry woman myself, and to-morrow, I hope to send her back to our own county."

"And you will have a blessing on your good deed—it's so few that have the power,—and the will. I have the will, God knows, but that's all. That poor girl is to be pitied. She has worked out a sentence under this roof—slaving from morning till night, and just keeping the soul in her body. She has been more to me—if an old maid may say so without offence—than a daughter; and when I heard of her being driven into the street, on a false charge, it was near being the death of me. For God's sake, send the poor creature home, or she will be caught in some other net,—and die."

"She is going home to-morrow, Miss Fergus. I'm so sorry you were robbed."

"Oh, my dear child, the plate and little trinkets were of no use to me. I never looked at them, from year's end to year's end. They were not worth all the rumpus, though they were precious enough. As the last dregs of an old family, they go to a distant relation I've never seen, and only for that, I'd freely give them to Johanna, who has nursed and waited on me, hand and foot. As it is, here is this ring," removing one as she spoke from her wrinkled finger. "Will you give it to her from me, as a token of affection and gratitude?"

The ring was a flawless emerald, in an ancient setting, and palpably of considerable value.

"But she would never wear it," remonstrated Mrs. Thurloe, "and it is much too small."

"It will fit her little finger, or it can be enlarged, and wear it she must, as a token of my esteem, and of her goodness. I wish it to go down in her family as an heirloom."

"I must say, Miss Fergus, that it is a strange fate for one of your family jewels, to descend to a peasant."

"It won't descend; and it will never be worn by a better woman."

"I daresay you are right, and from the little I've seen of Johanna, I've a great regard for her. I hope her soldier will come home safe and sound, and that they will have a grand wedding down in Kerry. By the way," with a sudden start, "I notice a miniature on the chimney-piece, which is quite amusingly like one we have at home—the portrait of my grand-uncle Dermot."

Miss Fergus arose stiffly, and dusted the picture with much deliberation; then she placed it in her visitor's hands. It represented a young officer in a scarlet uniform, and epaulettes. He had a striking face,—and a pair of merry dark eyes.

"Why it is my uncle, my grand-uncle Dermot!"

"He was Dermot Fitzgibbon, Captain in the Guards," added the old lady in a rather tremulous key. "He fell at the battle of the Alma."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Thurloe, raising a pair of similar brown eyes, to his aged ladylove, and her glance was interrogative.

"My dear, he gave it to me, before he sailed," she replied, with the calmness of age; "we knew each other as children, we grew up together, we had no money, people declared it was sheer folly; but we were to have been married, when he came back—and you know he never came back."

She heaved a long sigh, a sigh which connected this aged, solitary old woman, with a weather-worn slab, and a shrunken mound, on a far-away hill overlooking the Black Sea. He who lay there, was almost forgotten ; brave and lamented as he had once been. Soon there would be a shabby genteel funeral to the family vault at Fedamore, and she would be forgotten too. Their memory would fade together.

"I always knew, that Uncle Dermot had a love affair," said Mrs. Thurloe ; "it was a sort of legend in the family ; but I never heard the lady's name."

"No, my dear," with a little touch of hauteur, "*my* people would not allow it to be given out. They wanted me to make a great match. You will laugh when you hear an old bent body like me, talking of such a thing, but I could have married a man of rank. You'll never believe it, but I was a beauty—pink and white, and slim, and very lively."

Pink and white, and slim, and very lively ! What imagination could evoke such a picture from this bent, wrinkled, melancholy old woman ?

"I would never give up Dermot," she resumed, "and Death took him from me. I'm the last of the Fergus family, tottering down to the grave alone. Well, I shall not be sorry, when my name is called."

"Poor dear, I am afraid you have had a dismal life," murmured Mrs. Thurloe coming round, and smoothing her hands. "If Johanna did nothing else, she has made us acquainted, and I hope you will allow me, to come and see my aunt, that was to have been?"

"My child, you are too kind—too kind! It's wonderful how good people are to me, and now that I see you so close, you have *his* eyes."

"Well, I have always understood he was a real Fitzgibbon, and you know I have all the family traits,—dark eyes, long fingers, short temper."

"And a kind heart," supplemented the old lady. "If you can spare time to come, and visit a lonely old body, it will be a truly kind action. You are married?"

"Yes, two years ago, and—yes, I'm very happy. I shall come soon, and get you to move out of this horrid dull dingy place."

"Oh, don't you forget, that I'm shockingly poor."

"Maybe so, but the sun costs nothing—a dark room must be bad for anyone. So is"—looking about—"dust. I know of some nice cheery apartments, and I shall carry you off to inspect them. I shall come, and take you for drives!"

Miss Fergus lifted her hands in expostulation. "And now as I'm going back to look after your friend Johanna, to give her her wages, and endow her with your ring, I must say good-bye."

In another five minutes, the smart equipage, and the pretty lady, were but a treasured memory, and topic of conversation, in Sherlock Terrace.

CHAPTER XXXVII

JOHANNA was overwhelmed with gratitude and emotion, when her valiant emissary returned charged with Miss Fergus's message, and the ring, but altogether refused to believe, that this latter, was intended for her, and protested with unexpected animation.

"An' is it for the likes of me, to wear the likes of that, that has never been on any finger, but a real lady's! Sure everyone would be laughing at me, ma'am!" and she held out her well-shaped, work-worn hands.

"You can put it on on Sundays, and wear it for best. It's like a medal to a man—a sign of his brave or noble conduct."

"And sure how would I be brave or noble? Oh, ma'am, you are just making fun of me!"

"No, indeed, I am not, for, by all accounts, Johanna—and I don't wish to flatter you—as far as your lights showed you, you were both. And this

ring is to go down in your family, as an heirloom—always.”

“An heirloom! and what sort of a thing is that, ma’am? I’m pretty good at a hand-loom—but an heirloom is strange to me.”

“It is a possession of value, that you bequeath to your children, and they to theirs.”

Johanna became scarlet. To be discussing children in this way, was to her nature very queer, free sort of talk—and her not a married woman! But the gentry had their own notions, and Mrs. Thurloe was a Fitzgibbon, of Clare, who could do or say nothing but what was proper and correct.

The morning post brought a reply from Mary—a real letter, with the smell of the turf, the sign of the black ink, and a suggestion of candle-grease. It was apparently written in tremulous haste, as if under the pressure of strong emotion, and was half covered with blots and tears. This is what it said :—

“HEFFERNAN’S CROSS, CO. KERRY.

“JOHANNA ASTHORE,—

“And *how* am I to write to you, or get the use of my head at all, being fairly moidered with joy, and glad enough to kill three people. I never got such a

turn in my life, as when the letter came to say you were not dead, and us thinking you were in heaven this two years. For there was not a sign or line or token since you walked off that morning with my Dan. We were married last Shrove. Oh, but, Johanna, I am proud and thankful to know I will soon set eyes on you, and Shamus will be crazy with delight. It was a mercy he had not married another girl, thinking you were in glory, but there's not much chance of courtin', when a man's up to his neck fightin', as by all accounts Shamus has been for a whole mortal twelvemonth, and a sergeant, no less, and his name in the papers. You will see some changes here. A good many people died last winter, that never died before—the weather being severe. Before going further I should prepare you for news, and warn you that you have no stepmother. Didn't Maggie go, and fall out of the jennet's car, and break her neck? When she was found, there wasn't a word out of her; if she could speak, she would have laid it on the fairies—but the fairies had no hand in it whatever; it being well known it was entirely the work of Murphy's new whisky.

“Your father is stout and well, and a warm man now, since he came in for Maggie's fortune. Faix, he *earned* it sorely. He has a boy housekeeping for him, for he takes his solemn oath, that he will never

let another woman put a toe inside the door—but little he knows he has still Johanna.

"I will be waiting all day for you at Boher Station on Thursday, and mind you don't disappoint your loving friend,

"MARY."

When this letter had been read aloud, Johanna burst into tears, and sobbed from the combined emotions of excitement and joy, and the shock of hearing that Shamus was in the wars.

"And so that horrible little Lucy forged all the letters, and your friends never have had one of them!" said Mrs. Thurloe at last.

"So it seems, and oh, how could she go and do such a mean thing! and her knowing I was just breaking my heart. But I posted most of them myself?" And she looked at her friend, with an air of dazed interrogation.

"You posted letters, that bore a false address—can you understand that?"

"I can, ma'am, but I'd never have stooped to think any Christian would do such an act. Why she wrote the name, as I stood over her, never knowing. Isn't it a terrible thing to be reared ignorant, and shut off from reading and writing, going through the world, as I say, like a blind woman?"

"Perhaps you see and hear things that escape other people?"

Johanna looked puzzled for a moment, and then replied—

"Well, maybe I do see beautiful things in the flowers and trees, and the sea, that others does not notice. I see more in dumb animals than most,—and I believe they see something in me."

"And you will see all your dumb friends, and your other friends, before another twenty-four hours?"

"Yes, plase God, all but one," responded the girl, with a half-stifled sob.

The mail for the south, left the King's Bridge Station at ten o'clock. On Thursday morning Johanna had already secured her ticket, and was waiting on the platform with her new friends. It was a long train, and likely to be crowded. Presently the stirring sounds of a band—a military band—broke in upon the rumbling of trucks, and the snorting of engines. The air they played was "Come back to Erin."

In a few minutes a file of khaki-clad men marched out upon the platform. They were closely attended by an eager and critical crowd.

"It is part of the depôt of the Donnybrooks, and

some of the wounded men, returning from South Africa," Mrs. Thurloe explained to Johanna.

"Yes, there's a lot of the Fusiliers, that fought at Spion Kop," supplemented a man beside them. "There's a private over there, had seven wounds, and him as gay as a tinker's dog! Will ye mind the chap with one arm, and the fellow with a stick."

"Johanna, I think we had better stand back," suggested Mrs. Thurloe, "and let all the soldiers get in first. There is plenty of time.—Johanna, Johanna!" catching sight of her face, "what is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

Johanna had grown strangely pale, her very lips were colourless, her eyes were fastened on a sergeant who walked with a stick and a limp. A well-set-up curly-headed fellow, whose good-looking face was evidently sharpened by hardship or wounds.

"Oh God! it's—Shamus!" she gasped in an awe-struck undertone; her hands were outstretched, but her voice never rose above a whisper. Possibly this faint whisper may have travelled to his ear—he may have caught the mere mention of his own name—or perhaps it was a coincidence, but the soldier turned instantly in the direction of Mrs. Thurloe and her companion.

As his glance fell upon the tall figure in the Kerry cloak, he suddenly put his knuckles to his eyes. Was he awake? And alive?

Was this the ghost of his sweetheart?—the girl with the scared white face, standing aloof on the edge of the crowd? Was it the spirit of Shevauneen come to welcome him back to Ireland?

No, in another moment he had realised the happy truth; the trembling spectator was no vision from another world, but his own long-lamented Johanna.

* * * * *

Shamus McCarthy and John Daly's daughter had run away from their respective homes, mysteriously, separately, and with a long interval between the two sensations.

Amazing to relate, they returned in company, and it would be difficult to say which of them received the greater ovation. Shamus was a sergeant and had had his name in the public papers—as a hero, but Johanna was still a beauty—and what was more—an heiress.

Mary and Dan, her father, and the pup, anxiously awaited her arrival at Boher Station; they received

her with loud exclamations of joy—oh, to hear the “Irish” once more!—and not a few tears. As for the dumb beast, when he realised Johanna, his transports were so extravagant that he had to be again restrained by Dan’s red handkerchief, and kept in durance till the party were under weigh. The little station of Boher was packed—the crowd filled both platforms and even overflowed into the stationmaster’s garden, and every one of them were well-wishers to Shamus and Johanna.

Captain De Renzi was there himself, and one of the first to shake his former gamekeeper by the hand—indeed, the hero’s arm ached sorely that same day, and it was reported, that half the girls in the barony had made his happy return an excuse for kissing Shamus, the heart-breaker!

A fine lodge and a good billet were speedily found for the wounded hero, who took his discharge and a wife about the same time.

When Johanna and Shamus were married, the whitewashed chapel on the Kenmare road was crammed to the door, for the event was kept as a general holiday. They made a handsome couple, and were, in the opinion of their neighbours, well worth walking a long distance to see.

The bridegroom wore his medals and clasps, the bride a silk gown, a grand green ring, and a gold watch and chain, a present from Captain De Renzi. There was a lively dance at the Cross the same evening, and the great bonfire above the breen, was conspicuous for ten miles.

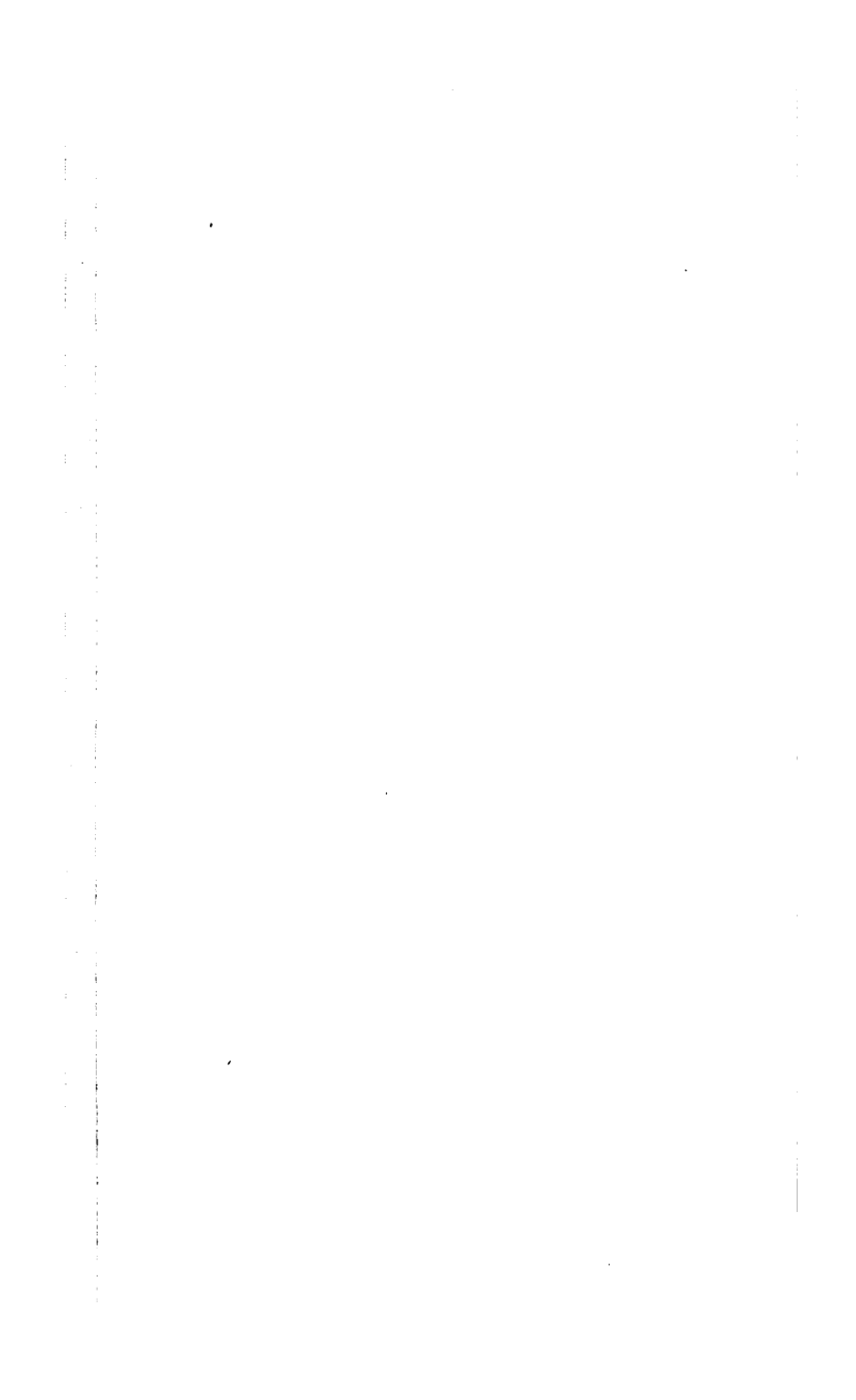
THE END

**MERCANTILE LIBRARY,
NEW YORK.**

HH

..











JUL 8 1936

